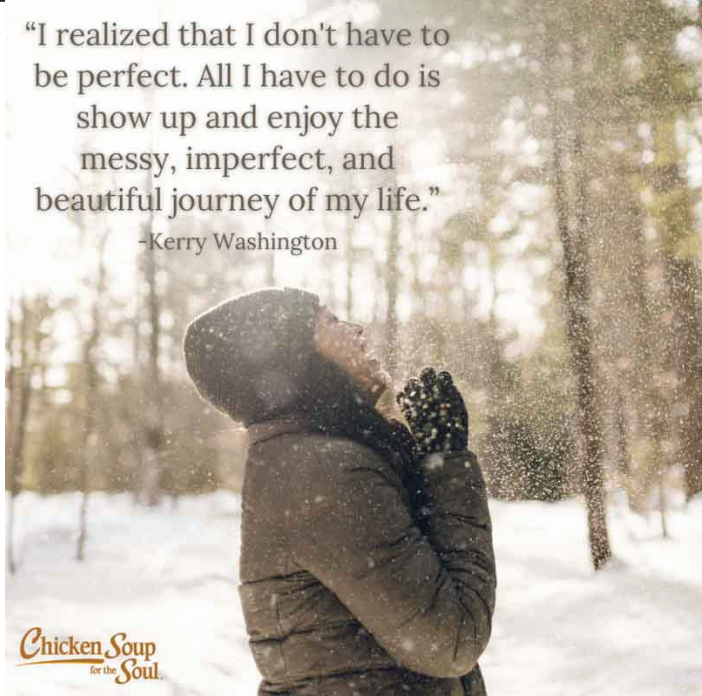


# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 1 of 87

- [1- Groton Area COVID-19 Report](#)
- [1- Upcoming Schedule](#)
- [2- Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [3- Soccer Awards](#)
- [4- What would your community's New Year's resolution be for 2021?](#)
- [5- Johnson's First Bill in 117th Congress to Set Supreme Court at Nine](#)
- [6- Gray Wolf Removed from Federal Endangered Species List](#)
- [7-National Gas Price Average Holds Steady for 12 Days](#)
- [8- Who is Right, Governor Noem: John Thune or Donald Trump?](#)
- [9- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [11- City Council Agenda](#)
- [12- Jan. 4 COVID-19 UPDATE](#)
- [20- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [21- Weather Pages](#)
- [24- Daily Devotional](#)
- [25- News from the Associated Press](#)



"I realized that I don't have to be perfect. All I have to do is show up and enjoy the messy, imperfect, and beautiful journey of my life."

-Kerry Washington

## Upcoming Schedule

Tuesday, Jan. 5: Basketball doubleheader with Warner. Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5:15 p.m., Girls Varsity at 6:30 p.m., Boys Varsity at 8 p.m.; City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Groton Community Center.

Thursday, Jan. 7: Wrestling triangular in Webster starting at 6 p.m. with Redfield and Webster; Boys Basketball hosts Sisseton with C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV and then Varsity.

Friday, Jan. 8: Girls Basketball at Sisseton with C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV and then Varsity.

Saturday, Jan. 9: Quad Wrestling at Wolsey-Wessington High School starting at 10 a.m.

Groton Area School District																
Active COVID-19 Cases																
Updated January 4, 2021; 4:10 PM																
JK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Staff	Total	
0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	



## OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 2 of 87



**DH BB**



**Warner at Groton Area**  
**Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2021**  
**Girls JV at 4 p.m.**  
**Followed by Boys JV**  
**Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity**

The service of

*Gary Heitmann*

Thursday, Jan. 7th, 10:30 a.m.

Groton United  
Methodist Church



**GDILIVE.COM**  
**GDIRADIO Locally 89.3FM**

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 3 of 87

## Groton Area Soccer Awards



**Rookie of the Year-Jerica Locke; Offensive MVP-Kenzie McInerney and Defensive MVP-Jaedyn Penning.** (Photo by Tricia Keith)



**Academic All-State Team: Brooklyn Gilbert and Regan Leicht.** (Photo by Tricia Keith)



**Heart and Soul; Trista Keith, Brooklyn Gilbert and Regan Leicht.** (Photo by Tricia Keith)



**Miss Universal: Kennedy Hansen and Riley Leicht.** (Photo by Tricia Keith)



**Miss Hustle: Brooklyn Hansen, Allyssa Locke and Madeline Flihs.** (Photo by Tricia Keith)

## What would your community's New Year's resolution be for 2021?



**Paula Jensen**  
Vice President of  
Advancement



This is the time of year when we reflect on our personal successes and failures, then use that knowledge to set new strategies for our future. So, imagine if every year your community residents gathered in celebration of the previous year, then prioritized three to five New Year's resolutions that would be worked on collaboratively throughout the year to create a thriving community? What would that look like?

There is a real motivational perspective in working collaboratively toward creating the thriving rural community we want to live in. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprised of a five-tier pyramid of human needs. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs are physiological (food and clothing), safety (job security), love and belonging needs (friendship), esteem, and self-actualization. Needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to needs higher up. Recently, a colleague working in the rural community and economic development field shared a rural hierarchy of needs. From the bottom of the pyramid upwards, the needs were housing, education, quality of life, broadband, medical, transportation, and workforce.

These basic rural needs are essential conditions for the maintenance, growth, and well-being of our communities. People often ask me, "Why do some rural communities thrive, and others drop off the map?" My observations have revealed that thriving communities employ three motivational factors: grit, agency, and mastery.

Community Grit is defined as the passion and perseverance for long-term goals held by community residents and leaders who can envision their community thriving.

Community Agency is the capacity to overcome obstacles by navigating the system within given circumstances. Communities that display agency come together and layout strategies based on local needs. They also engage local residents, resource providers, and other stakeholders to approach solutions through innovative thinking.

Community Mastery is when residents and organizations collaboratively apply grit and agency over long periods of time to grow in amazing ways. This unique system has the capacity to move rural communities

toward fully actualizing their potential.

The Community Mastery theory is a long-term strategy for community and economic development that can be achieved in three stages:

Apprentice Stage

Get connected – map out who is in your local, regional, and statewide networks, begin building relationships, then invite them into your work.

Get a vision – play to your strengths, then widen the vision to discover a niche that fits the future you want to create in your community.

Get a strategy – adapt systems of the past into a flexible view of your future that will fully actualize local potential.

Creative / Active Stage

Get Communicating – create a system that engages a multitude of voices and reaches all generations across many channels.

Get Leading – develop innovative opportunities for anyone, at any age to lead from their strengths.

Get Learning – build skills locally through training and mentorships, then practice and experiment by taking on small projects that lead toward a greater strategy.

Mastery Stage

Get Transformed - establish a system that celebrates success, learns from failure, and continually engages new people in various stages of the Community Mastery theory, while living like community and economic development is a marathon, not a sprint.

If you made it to this paragraph and are fretting about setting New Year's resolutions for your community this year because it just will not work, then show some grit by sharing this article with three other people. Have a conversation and breakdown the community mastery theory because there's always good value in trying to discover what is possible for your community.

Having a passion for community leadership and development is what drives Paula Jensen's personal and professional life. Paula resides in her hometown of Langford, South Dakota, population 318+. She serves as a Strategic Doing practitioner, grant writer and community coach with Dakota Resources based in Renner, South Dakota. Dakota Resources is a mission-driven 501c3 Community Development Financial Institution working to connect capital and capacity to empower rural communities. Contact her at paula@dakotaresources.org.

## Johnson's First Bill in 117th Congress to Set Supreme Court at Nine

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Representative Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) introduced a constitutional amendment which limits the size of the U.S. Supreme Court to nine Justices. In recent months, there have been calls to "pack the court" following the confirmation of Justice Amy Coney Barrett.

"Since 1869, our Supreme Court has had nine Justices," said Johnson. "We are living in a hyper-partisan world and Democrat leaders have already called for additional seats on the court. The control of the Senate hangs in the balance and if Democrats are successful in Georgia, we could very well see efforts to pack the Supreme Court. We must preserve the impartiality of the Supreme Court and setting the court at nine will do just that. My constitutional amendment is more necessary than ever."

## SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS



### **Gray Wolf Removed from Federal Endangered Species List**

PIERRE, S.D. – On January 4, 2021, the gray wolf will be delisted as a federally protected species following 45 years of protection under the Endangered Species Act. This action allows South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) to manage wolves as a predator as defined in state law.

Under GFP's management authority, trappers, sportsmen and women, landowners and livestock producers will have the ability to harvest gray wolves across the state beginning on January 4, 2021. The same license requirements needed for coyotes are needed to harvest a wolf. These include a predator/varmint license, furbearer license or any resident or nonresident hunting license. To trap a wolf, a furbearer license is required. Landowners on their own land and youth under the age of 16 are exempt from the license requirement.

"Over the past several decades, South Dakota has had a handful of gray wolves killed on both sides of the Missouri River," said Keith Fisk, program administrator with GFP. "The department suspects the gray wolves that have been present in South Dakota are likely transient animals that have dispersed from populations east and west of the state."

To gather further information and a DNA sample, the department is requesting anyone who harvests a wolf in South Dakota notify a wildlife conservation officer within 24 hours and that the inspection and sampling by a GFP representative occur within 48 hours.

GFP does not support gray wolf expansion in South Dakota. For more information, please visit [gfp.sd.gov/wolf](http://gfp.sd.gov/wolf).

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 7 of 87

## National Gas Price Average Holds Steady for 12 Days

January 4, 2021 – The new year has started, but the national gas price average remains unchanged, holding steady at \$2.25 for the last 12 days. Pump price stability at the start of the year is credited to consistent crude oil prices in late December, about \$47-48/bbl, combined with low demand. U.S. gasoline demand, as recorded by the Energy Information Administration (EIA), was at the lowest level for the last week of December in 23 years (since 1998) – at 8.1 million b/d.

### South Dakota Gas Prices

Today \$2.22

Yesterday \$2.22

Last week \$2.21

Last month \$2.11

Last year \$2.48

"Holiday road travel was down at least 25%. With fewer people on the road, the majority of states saw little change at the pump from the last week of 2020 to the first few days of 2021," said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA spokesperson.

While the national gas price average is nine cents more than last month, January gas prices are already 33 cents cheaper than this time last year. That is the largest year-over-year difference at the beginning of January since 2015. AAA expects demand to dwindle in coming weeks and gas prices to likely be cheaper, especially if crude oil holds at the current price point.

How high or low gas prices will go in 2021 will largely depend on crude oil prices, supply and demand. AAA expects that as the vaccine becomes more widely available and states loosen travel restrictions, Americans will begin to drive more and at that point we will see an impact at the pump. At \$2.17, 2020 saw the lowest annual national gas price average since 2016.

### Quick Stats

The nation's top 10 year-over-year decreases: Arizona (-60 cents), Utah (-53 cents), West Virginia (-48 cents), Alaska (-48 cents), Idaho (-46 cents), Wyoming (-43 cents), Colorado (-42 cents), Oregon (-42 cents), Connecticut (-42 cents) and Vermont (-41 cents).

The nation's top 10 least expensive markets: Mississippi (\$1.92), Texas (\$1.93), Missouri (\$1.95), Louisiana (\$1.96), Oklahoma (\$1.98), Arkansas (\$1.99), South Carolina (\$2.01), Kansas (\$2.01), Alabama (\$2.02) and Tennessee (\$2.04).

### Oil Market Dynamics

At the close of Thursday's formal trading session, WTI increased by 12 cents to settle at \$48.50. Crude prices increased last week due to a weak dollar and rising market optimism that coronavirus vaccines will help crude oil demand recover in 2021. However, as coronavirus infection rates continue to climb and travel restrictions increase, crude prices will likely be capped this week.

Motorists can find current gas prices along their route with the free AAA Mobile app for iPhone, iPad and Android. The app can also be used to map a route, find discounts, book a hotel and access AAA roadside assistance. Learn more at [AAA.com/mobile](http://AAA.com/mobile).

AAA provides automotive, travel, and insurance services to 61 million members nationwide and more than 102,000 members in South Dakota. AAA advocates for the safety and mobility of its members and has been committed to outstanding road service for more than 100 years. AAA is a non-stock, non-profit corporation working on behalf of motorists, who can now map a route, find local gas prices, discover discounts, book a hotel, and track their roadside assistance service with the AAA Mobile app ([AAA.com/mobile](http://AAA.com/mobile)) for iPhone, iPad and Android. For more information, visit [www.AAA.com](http://www.AAA.com).

## Who is Right, Governor Noem: John Thune or Donald Trump?

Sioux Falls, SD (January 4, 2021) – State Democratic Chairman Randy Seiler today called on Governor Kristi Noem to set the record straight as to who she believes is right in regard to the November 3rd presidential election – US Senator John Thune or President Donald Trump.

In recent days, Trump has called Thune a RINO (Republican In Name Only) and indicated he would recruit a primary opponent to Thune in 2022 – with Kristi Noem at the top of his list. Trump is upset that Thune has rejected claims of voter fraud in the November 3rd election and that Thune indicated he believed Joe Biden won the election.

“So who is right, Governor? Is President Trump right in his claim that the election was rigged against him and that Thune is not a true Republican for saying otherwise? Or is John Thune right that the election was legally won by Joe Biden and we should move on from it?” Seiler asked the Governor.

The situation for Noem is tricky. She campaigned hard for Trump, traveling across the country before the election while she ignored the raging coronavirus in South Dakota that has killed more people per capita than any other state in the nation – that fact likely won’t be ignored by opponents and voters should she run for reelection. Noem even invited Trump to South Dakota for a super spreading COVID event at Mount Rushmore on July 3rd and she recently hired Trump loyalist Cory Lewandowski to guide her national ambitions. So siding with Thune risks alienating Trump.

Yet, siding with Trump is also tricky for Noem. Does she really want to risk alienating John Thune thus threatening her support among Republican voters in South Dakota?

“Kristi Noem made this bed by selling out to Donald Trump at all costs. Now let’s see if she is willing to sleep in it by turning her back on John Thune,” Seiler said.



**Randy Seiler**



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 9 of 87

**#316 in a series**

## **Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller**

We are seeing numbers much like yesterday's, a bit higher here and a bit lower there. There were 191,300 new cases reported today. That puts us at 20,853,000, 0.9% more than yesterday and on track to hit 21 million tomorrow.

For the record, we are now over half a million cases in prisons, jails, and immigration detention centers, all places people don't have a choice about leaving. There are 88 facilities which have had 1000 or more infections. Some entities are transferring prisoners out of crowded facilities with high infection rates in order to ease crowding; and these moves have more than once or twice simply spread the infection to the new facilities. I'm going to say again that it's not good enough to just say, "Bad people deserve what they get." When you lock people up in a place you're not going to let them leave, you take responsibility for their welfare. We're not doing very well with that.

Hospitalizations are at another record level today at 125,562. I know I keep saying this, but I really don't know how much more the system can stand—and as you'll read below, it's starting to break. And we're up to 353,623 deaths in the US in this pandemic, 0.6% more than yesterday. There were 1943 new deaths reported today.

CNN came up with a troubling fact today: Over the past week, we have had, on average, one Covid-19 death every 33 seconds. More people died in December—77,572—than in any other month of the pandemic, more than twice November's number; next-worst was April with 60,738.

We knew it was coming, but still we went out and about town, traveled for the holidays, gathered for Christmas dinner, and partied New Year's Eve away. And now ambulance crews in Los Angeles County have been instructed not to transport patients who have only a small chance of surviving and to conserve the use of oxygen, reserving it for patients with oxygen saturation levels below 90 percent. This isn't because some heartless person is running things; it is because there is no longer enough health care to go around. Available ICU bed capacity is zero percent. There's nowhere to put more sick people. There is a shortage of oxygen. California is unlikely to be the only state facing these sorts of decisions in upcoming weeks. In fact, Atlanta hospitals are over capacity; they have people waiting days to be admitted. Over one-fifth of US hospitals with ICUs say at least 95 percent of their ICU beds were filled, and 77 percent of ICU beds are occupied nationwide, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Epidemiologist Dr. Robert Kim-Farley, said, "I actually think we're now beyond waves or surges and this is a viral tsunami that we are now experiencing." What did we expect?

The experts are predicting we're about to enter the hardest weeks of the pandemic. We went into the holidays with huge growth in cases and unchecked transmission pretty much across the country; then we traveled all over the place, clocking several of the biggest travel days of the pandemic in the last two weeks and averaging over a million air travelers per day. A CDC ensemble forecast projects we could lose 80,000 more lives in the next three weeks, going over 3000 deaths per day for days. Dr. Jonathan Reiner, professor of medicine at George Washington University, agreed, telling CNN, "We're going to lose 3,000, maybe more, people a day, probably until we're well into February. And then, we should start to see some light." Lord, I hope so.

A new variant that has been spreading in South Africa, although it appears to have come there from the UK, has a pattern of mutations that has researchers more concerned than the UK variant they're calling B.1.1.7. This one's also being tested against the antibodies elicited in vaccinated people; there should be news on these tests soon. And the CDC has set a goal to double the number of patient specimens which will be subjected to genomic testing in the US. We've talked about the fact that the US is not sequencing enough of the cases seen here; this is still not enough, but is a step in the right direction. We'll keep an eye on this variant too and see what turns up.

On December 17, Johnson & Johnson finished enrolling the phase 3 clinical trial for its vaccine candidate with 45,000 volunteers participating. Given current infection rates, they're thinking they'll have enough data to determine safety and efficacy by the end of this month. If this timeline holds, the application for

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 10 of 87

emergency use authorization (EUA) should be in the FDA's hands in February; and we know by now the FDA isn't messing around on these approvals once they have data. This is a DNA vaccine that uses a modified adenovirus, one that in its unmodified form can cause colds and in its modified form is unable to replicate in a host. This adenovirus will carry the DNA coding for the viral spike (S) protein into host cells where the protein will be made. When host cells express the protein on their surfaces, it will stimulate an immune response. While there is also a second trial going on for a two-dose regimen, this is a single-dose trial. Because DNA is a lot more stable than mRNA, this vaccine doesn't have the demanding storage conditions of the first two vaccines and keeps well at refrigerator temperatures. Let's hope this one works out as well as the first candidates did.

The vaccine roll-out is going slowly. Fewer than 30% of doses which were distributed as of today have been administered with only four states having administered at least half of what they've received and 12 states having administered less than a quarter of their supply. There is some lag in reporting administered doses, but I'd guess reporting was pretty much caught up after the long weekend. Vaccination on the scale we're attempting was always going to be a challenge; but it is disappointing to see things going so poorly. Developing a whiz-bang vaccine is useful only after the vaccine gets into people.

We talked in the past couple of days about the move in Europe to consider delaying second doses of the vaccines in order to get first doses to more people sooner. We also talked about the reasons experts in the US are not on board with that, although we are hearing from a few that we should go there too. The problem, of course, is that we don't have any evidence that the vaccines will be effective given on a schedule which was not tested in clinical trials.

Now a new idea has surfaced for the Moderna vaccine, and that is to give half-doses. For this, there appears to be evidence; we are hearing that in phase 2 trials the data show people under 55 had similar binding and neutralizing antibody response to 100-microgram and 50-microgram doses. The current approved dose is 100 micrograms. Giving half-doses would have the same effect of stretching the vaccine supply as delaying second doses in terms of covering more people. Moncef Slaoui, the chief scientific advisor to Operation Warp Speed, said the FDA will meet this week to consider this possibility; if these data hold up to scrutiny, there could be a change in the immunization protocols. Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told CNN, "He's saying that the half dose for younger people is as good as the full dose, but I want to check that out myself before I start talking about it. I totally trust [Slaoui]. But I want to look at the data myself." Fauci did also point out to the New York Times that, "At the present time we are not dealing with a shortage of doses—we are dealing with the need to increase our efficiency in getting people vaccinated." He left open the possibility of changing the dosage if the data support it and if a shortage emerged. But he makes a good point; if we can't even get the vaccine we have into people in good order, there's not much point in worrying about how to stretch that supply.

I'm going to add that, just before posting this, I saw in a late-breaking story that the FDA has published a statement on its website tonight saying, "We have been following the discussions and news reports about reducing the number of doses, extending the length of time between doses, changing the dose (half-dose), or mixing and matching vaccines in order to immunize more people against COVID-19," then adding that such changes should be researched in clinical trials before being adopted. Guess we shouldn't get too hopeful the FDA's going to sign off on that one then.

We'll wait and see what the scientists think. More people vaccinated is better, but we certainly want to have effective vaccinations, not just completed ones. For the record, I have not seen similar claims made about using half-doses for the Pfizer vaccine, but that one uses a much smaller dose in the first place.

A few days before Christmas, a police officer in Massachusetts got a fairly routine call: A shoplifter had been caught at a grocery store. When he arrived, he found two women with two young children who'd put groceries into bags at the self-checkout without scanning them, which means, of course, that they did not pay for those items. When Officer Matt Lima arrived, the women explained they could not afford all of the groceries they needed and wanted to provide Christmas dinner for their children.

He confirmed with the store that the items they'd taken without paying were all food items. Instead of

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 11 of 87**

charging them with a crime, he pulled out his own wallet and purchased grocery gift cards for them to the tune of \$250; then he told them to stop at a different location on their way home and buy what they needed. According to the police department website, he said he was thinking of his own children when he did that. Apparently in their town, this sort of thing doesn't get you into trouble with the boss either: The Chief commended Officer Lima on the department website, saying, "His actions exemplify what it means to protect and serve the members of our community." It's nice when doing a good thing ends well. Keep yourself safe. I'll be back tomorrow.

## Groton City Council Meeting Agenda January 5, 2021 – 7:00pm Groton Community Center

**(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)**

1. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
2. James Valley Discussion
3. Minutes
4. Bills
5. Employee salaries and volunteer list
6. Department reports
7. Election Date April 13, 2021  
2-Year Terms Ending:  
    Jon Cutler – Ward 1  
    Shirley Wells – Ward 2  
    Karyn Babcock – Ward 3  
1-Year Appointment Ending:  
    Emily Kappes – Ward 2
8. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
9. Adjournment

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 12 of 87

## Jan. 4 COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota: Community Spread for week of Jan. 4:

**Moderate:** Aurora, Gregory, Haakon, Marshall downgraded from Substantial to Moderate; Sully upgraded from Minimal to Moderate.

**Minimal:** Faulk, Hand, Jackson downgraded from Moderate to Minimal.

Positive: +111 (100,643 total) Positivity Rate: 6.3%

Total Tests: 1758 (775,626 total)

Total Persons Tested: 2009 (375,955 total)

Hospitalized: +10 (5742 total) 268 currently hospitalized (+6)

Avera St. Luke's: 8 (0) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 3 (-1) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 2 (+1) COVID-19 ventilators.

Sanford Aberdeen: 11 (+3) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Deaths: +0 (1513 total)

Recovered: +68 (93,099 total)

Active Cases: +43 (6031)

Percent Recovered: 92.5%

Vaccinations: +82 (26952)

Beadle (37) +1 positive, +1 recovered (74 active cases)

Brookings (30) +9 positive, +2 recovered (255 active cases)

Brown (63): +7 positive, +1 recovered (288 active cases)

Clark (2): +0 positive, +1 recovered (14 active cases)

Clay (12): +4 positive, +3 recovered (94 active cases)

Codington (70): +3 positive, +0 recovered (247 active cases)

Davison (53): +1 positive, +0 recovered (103 active cases)

Day (20): +1 positive, +0 recovered (35 active cases)

Edmunds (4): +2 positive, +1 recovered (65 active cases)

Faulk (12): +0 positive, +0 recovered (3 active cases)

Grant (35): +1 positive, +1 recovered (28 active cases)

Hanson (3): +0 positive, +0 recovered (19 active cases)

Hughes (27): +0 positive, +2 recovered (108 active cases)

Lawrence (28): +1 positive, +1 recovered (116 active cases)

Lincoln (66): +7 positive, +4 recovered (466 active cases)

Marshall (4): +0 positive, +1 recovered (17 active cases)

McCook (22): +0 positive, +0 recovered (37 active cases)

McPherson (1): +0 positive, +1 recovery (7 active case)

Minnehaha (271): +18 positive, +9 recovered (1491 active cases)

Pennington (134): +25 positive, +12 recovered (838 active cases)

Potter (3): +0 positive, +0 recovered (10 active cases)

Roberts (32): +2 positive, +3 recovered (94 active cases)

Spink (24): +0 positive, +0 recovered (41 active cases)

Walworth (14): +1 positive, +0 recovered (44 active cases)

### NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Jan. 4:

- 4.4% rolling 14-day positivity
- 199 new positives
- 2,946 susceptible test encounters
- 98 currently hospitalized (0)
- 1,915 active cases (+63)
- 1,312 total deaths (+2)

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 13 of 87

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	414	386	784	8	Moderate	17.24%
Beadle	2520	2409	5233	37	Substantial	10.66%
Bennett	355	343	1090	8	Moderate	5.49%
Bon Homme	1479	1418	1883	23	Substantial	14.04%
Brookings	3044	2759	10109	30	Substantial	13.28%
Brown	4505	4154	11155	63	Substantial	22.44%
Brule	637	611	1697	7	Moderate	26.09%
Buffalo	411	396	854	10	Minimal	19.05%
Butte	897	839	2842	18	Substantial	15.96%
Campbell	115	107	210	4	Minimal	25.00%
Charles Mix	1127	1062	3548	12	Substantial	10.84%
Clark	317	301	859	2	Moderate	2.22%
Clay	1649	1543	4546	12	Substantial	17.89%
Codington	3494	3177	8534	70	Substantial	19.61%
Corson	454	426	897	11	Moderate	24.24%
Custer	683	652	2423	9	Substantial	12.79%
Davison	2737	2581	5760	53	Substantial	16.12%
Day	542	487	1557	20	Substantial	19.12%
Deuel	417	384	1002	7	Substantial	11.76%
Dewey	1306	1190	3500	12	Substantial	19.23%
Douglas	385	351	826	8	Substantial	27.78%
Edmunds	387	318	883	4	Substantial	9.09%
Fall River	458	426	2294	12	Substantial	10.59%
Faulk	313	298	604	12	Minimal	14.29%
Grant	830	767	1947	35	Substantial	22.08%
Gregory	484	447	1095	26	Moderate	0.00%
Haakon	234	202	472	8	Moderate	10.00%
Hamlin	609	542	1529	36	Substantial	9.78%
Hand	312	298	704	2	Minimal	0.00%
Hanson	315	293	612	3	Moderate	23.81%
Harding	89	85	156	1	Minimal	0.00%
Hughes	2034	1899	5674	27	Substantial	4.76%
Hutchinson	703	654	2050	17	Substantial	13.21%

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 14 of 87

Hyde	132	130	369	1	Minimal	0.00%
Jackson	262	245	856	8	Minimal	27.27%
Jerauld	264	235	500	15	Minimal	15.79%
Jones	68	65	187	0	Minimal	11.11%
Kingsbury	545	494	1434	13	Substantial	8.11%
Lake	1042	959	2789	16	Substantial	30.19%
Lawrence	2595	2451	7596	28	Substantial	11.54%
Lincoln	6911	6379	17609	66	Substantial	19.26%
Lyman	527	496	1708	9	Moderate	16.67%
Marshall	262	241	1011	4	Moderate	4.00%
McCook	688	629	1417	22	Substantial	29.31%
McPherson	183	175	507	1	Moderate	2.94%
Meade	2290	2114	6734	24	Substantial	20.97%
Mellette	220	210	658	2	Minimal	10.34%
Miner	230	201	502	7	Moderate	9.52%
Minnehaha	25333	23571	68396	271	Substantial	16.11%
Moody	542	496	1597	14	Substantial	24.44%
Oglala Lakota	1940	1798	6207	35	Substantial	16.17%
Pennington	11457	10485	34067	134	Substantial	20.97%
Perkins	290	248	680	11	Substantial	18.92%
Potter	305	292	720	3	Moderate	8.57%
Roberts	1002	876	3763	32	Substantial	19.55%
Sanborn	307	296	618	3	Minimal	40.00%
Spink	710	645	1875	24	Substantial	10.20%
Stanley	280	262	784	2	Substantial	6.52%
Sully	113	103	252	3	Moderate	10.00%
Todd	1169	1116	3826	19	Substantial	8.37%
Tripp	631	594	1335	12	Substantial	12.12%
Turner	976	878	2396	49	Substantial	22.00%
Union	1641	1478	5452	30	Substantial	14.33%
Walworth	637	579	1632	14	Substantial	23.76%
Yankton	2533	2294	8277	26	Substantial	12.66%
Ziebach	302	259	704	8	Moderate	14.29%
Unassigned	0	0	1926	0		

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 15 of 87

## South Dakota



### AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	3762	0
10-19 years	11090	0
20-29 years	18282	4
30-39 years	16637	13
40-49 years	14439	27
50-59 years	14268	78
60-69 years	11421	188
70-79 years	6024	327
80+ years	4609	876

### SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	52542	732
Male	47990	781

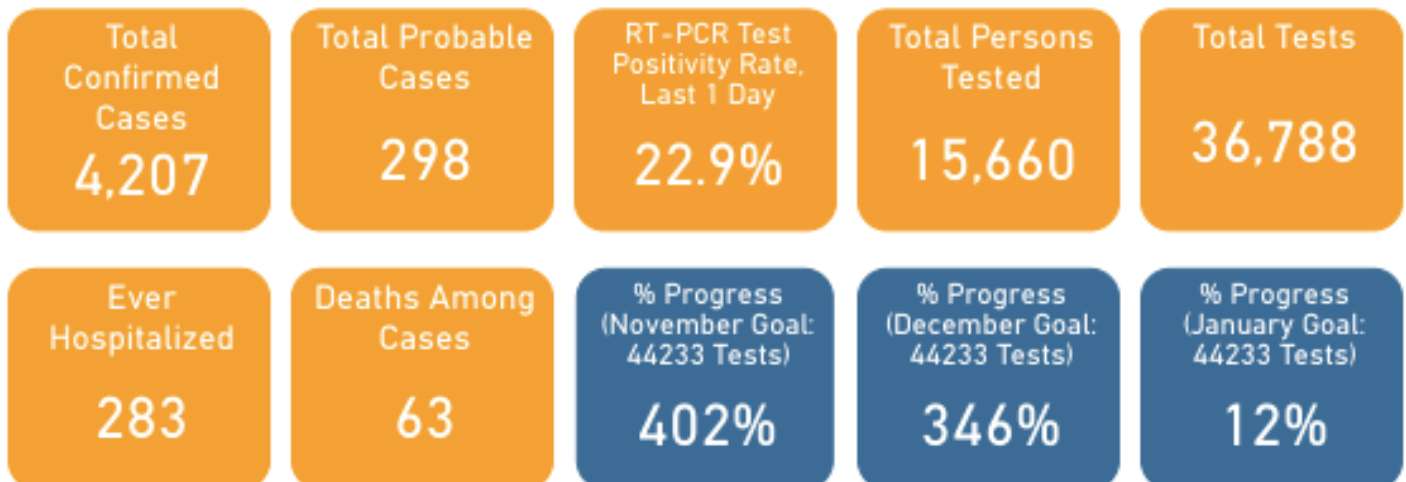
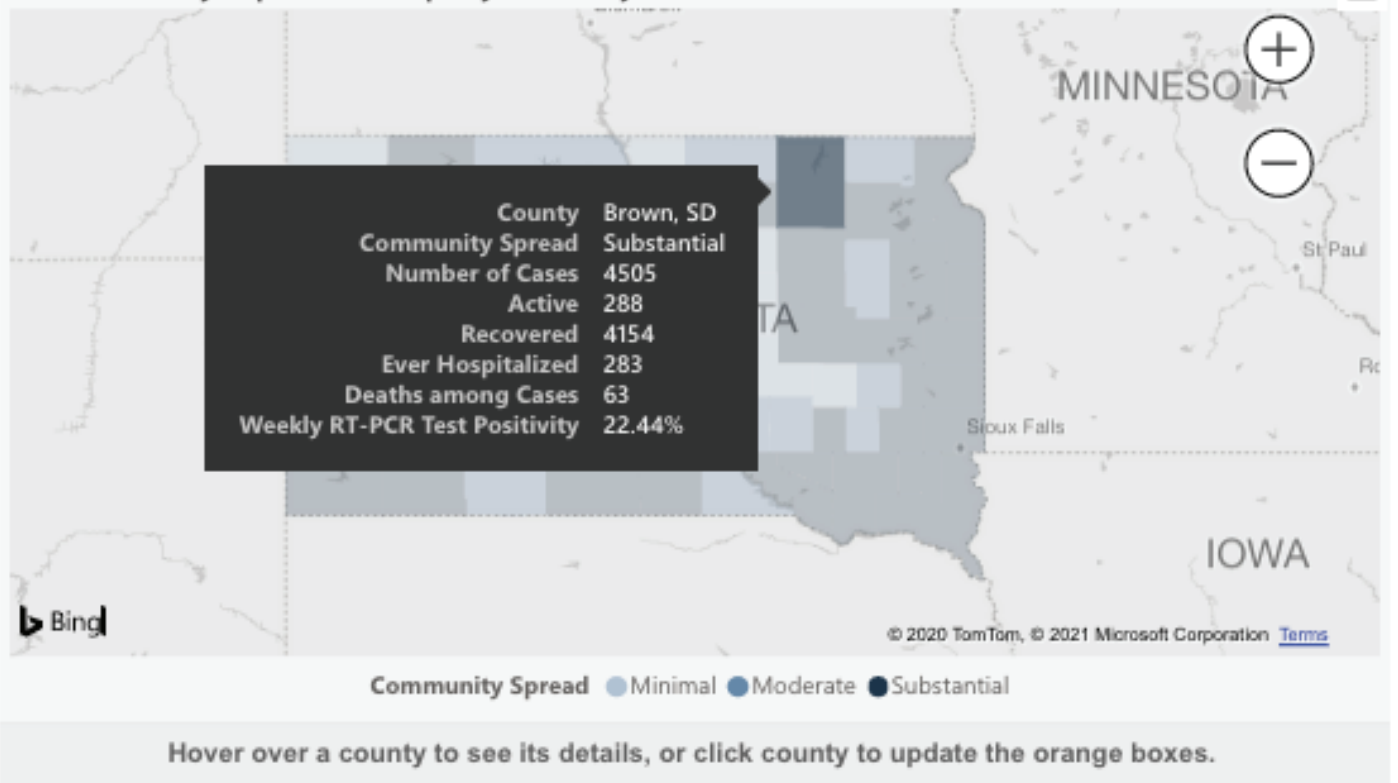
# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 16 of 87

## Brown County



### Community Spread Map by County of Residence





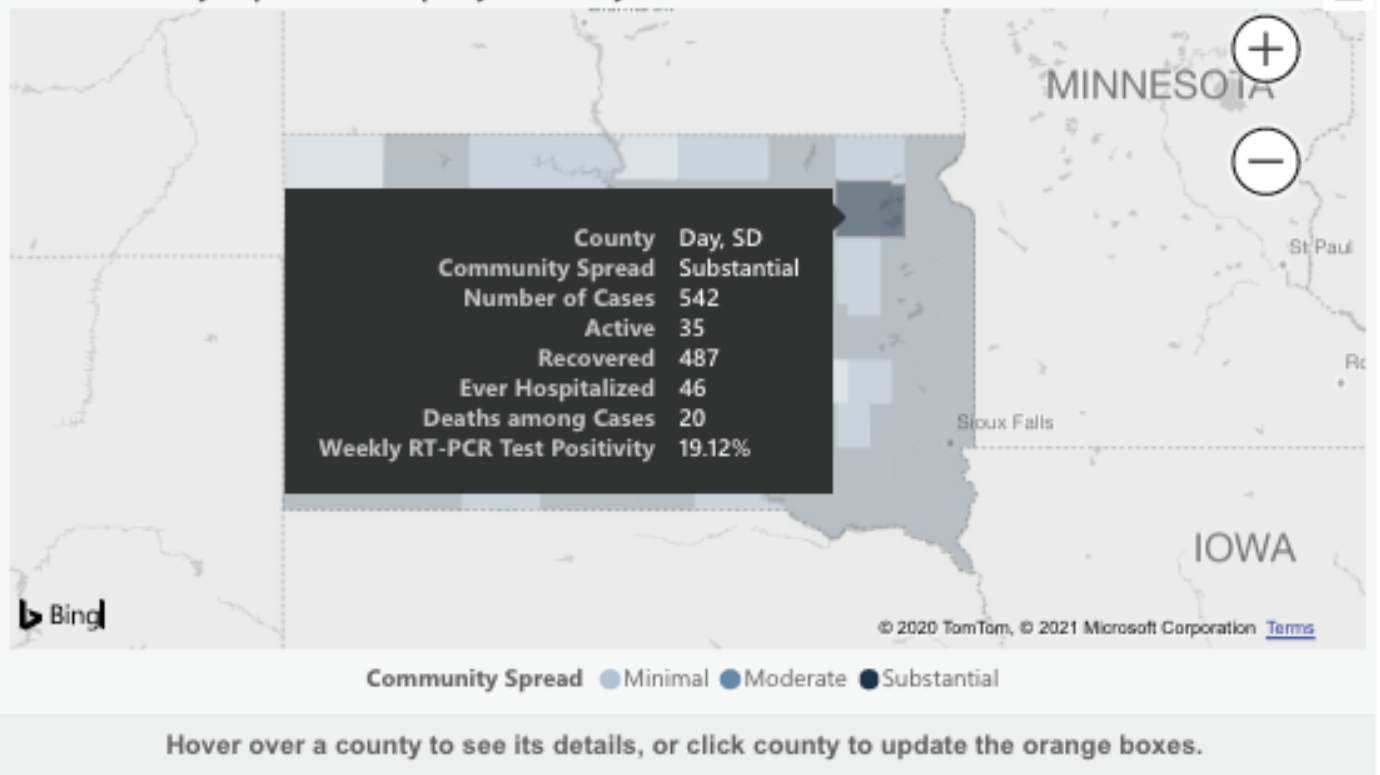
# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 17 of 87

## Day County



### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 18 of 87

## Vaccinations

Total Doses Administered

26,952

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine

26,952

Manufacturer	Number of Doses
Moderna	14,218
Pfizer	12,734

Doses	Number of Recipients
Moderna - 1 dose	14,218
Pfizer - 1 dose	12,734

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	Total # Persons
Aurora	46	46	46
Beadle	610	610	610
Bennett*	31	31	31
Bon Homme*	226	226	226
Brookings	887	887	887
Brown	1334	1,334	1,334
Brule*	104	104	104
Buffalo*	3	3	3
Butte	27	27	27
Campbell	126	126	126
Charles Mix*	235	235	235
Clark	70	70	70
Clay	338	338	338
Codington*	956	956	956
Corson*	8	8	8
Custer*	99	99	99
Davison	824	824	824
Day*	170	170	170
Deuel	92	92	92
Dewey*	51	51	51
Douglas*	102	102	102
Edmunds	99	99	99
Fall River*	85	85	85
Faulk	21	21	21
Grant*	209	209	209
Gregory*	172	172	172
Haakon*	47	47	47

# Groton Daily Independent

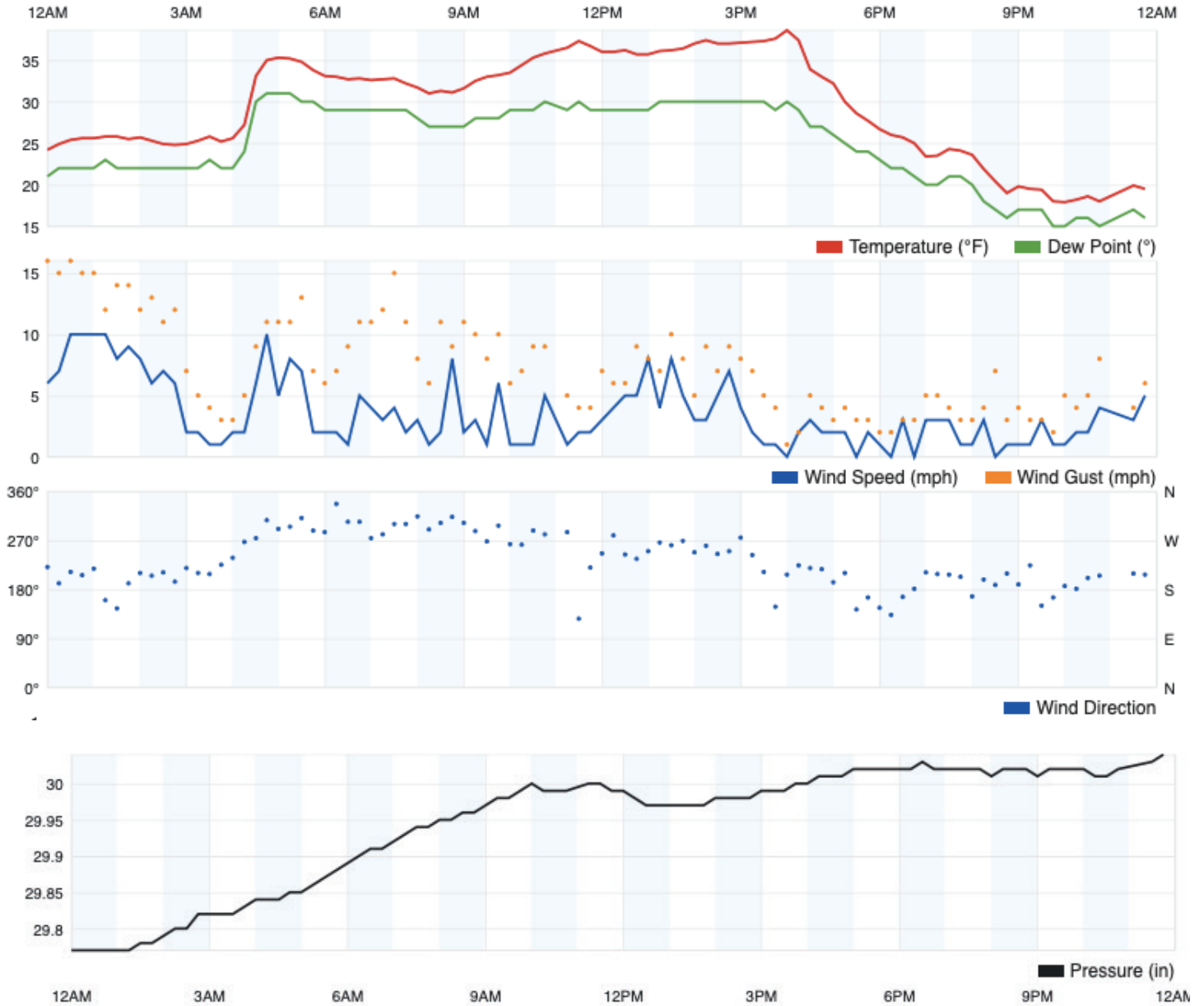
Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 19 of 87

Hamlin	145	145	145
Hand	108	108	108
Hanson	51	51	51
Harding	0	0	0
Hughes*	608	608	608
Hutchinson*	460	460	460
Hyde*	11	11	11
Jackson*	28	28	28
Jerauld	66	66	66
Jones*	25	25	25
Kingsbury	186	186	186
Lake	316	316	316
Lawrence	172	172	172
Lincoln	3319	3,319	3,319
Lyman*	39	39	39
Marshall*	116	116	116
McCook	190	190	190
McPherson	19	19	19
Meade*	213	213	213
Mellette*	2	2	2
Miner	69	69	69
Minnehaha	8578	8,578	8,578
Moody*	135	135	135
Oglala Lakota*	7	7	7
Pennington*	1787	1,787	1,787
Perkins*	20	20	20
Potter	72	72	72
Roberts*	120	120	120
Sanborn	79	79	79
Spink	245	245	245
Stanley*	83	83	83
Sully	20	20	20
Todd*	6	6	6
Tripp*	109	109	109
Turner	378	378	378
Union	143	143	143
Walworth*	195	195	195
Yankton	1032	1,032	1,032
Ziebach*	7	7	7
Other	821	821	821

# Groton Daily Independent






Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 20 of 87

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 21 of 87

Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
				
20%	70%	40%		
Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Drizzle/Snow	Snow Likely and Patchy Fog	Chance Snow and Patchy Fog then Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy
High: 36 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 33 °F	Low: 17 °F	High: 32 °F

## Timing of Weak System Tuesday

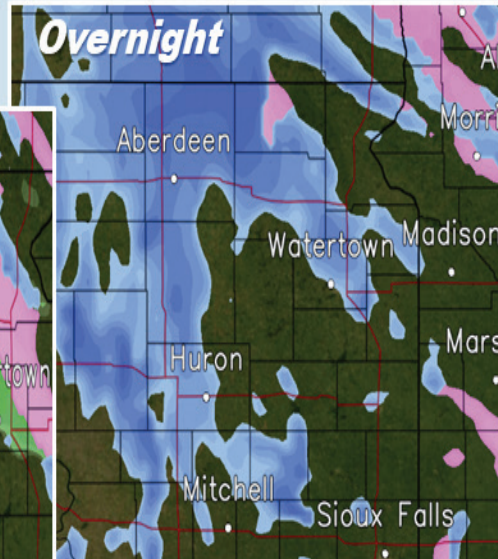
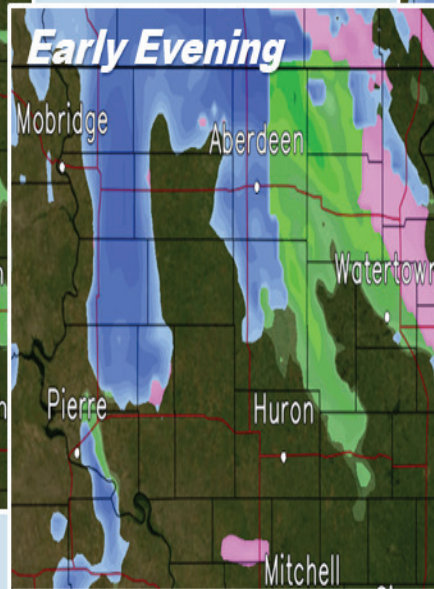
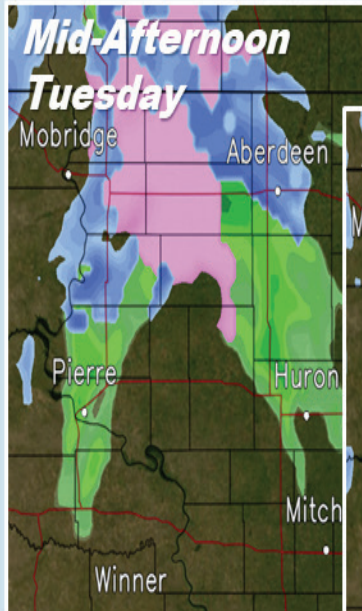
3:26 PM - Monday, January 04, 2021

### Overview

- Weak system will drift across area.
- Mid-Afternoon - rain/snow mix.
- Narrow axis moderate snow on back-side.
- Light snow spreads east & lingers into early Wednesday.

### Impacts

- Trace – 2 inches.
- Locally higher amounts depend on where axis sets up.
- Expect sick Wed-AM commute.



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

A weak system will develop over the area Tuesday afternoon bringing a mix of rain and snow initially. This system will pivot overhead and then drift east, and as it does so, precipitation will change to snow, with the potential for a slow moving narrow axis of more moderate snow. At this point, that area looks to develop close to Aberdeen, but this is not 100 percent certain. Areas outside this band will see much less snowfall as the system departs around mid to late morning Wednesday.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 22 of 87

## Today in Weather History

January 5, 1994: A low-pressure system traveled from the Dakotas, across southern Minnesota, and to the Great Lakes Region, from the late morning of the 5th, through the early evening of the 7th. By the early evening hours on the 7th, up to three and one-half feet of snow had fallen along the higher terrain of Lake Superior. The storm also produced heavy snow across parts of central Minnesota. Six inches or more occurred across much of central Minnesota. In west-central Minnesota, Wheaton and Artichoke Lake received 5 inches, with 6 inches at Browns Valley.

January 5, 2012: Numerous record high temperatures were broken across central and northeast South Dakota along with west-central Minnesota throughout the week. Some of the records were broken by as much as 12 to 17 degrees and had been held for 80 to 90 years. Aberdeen surpassed their all-time record high for January by 3 degrees with 63 degrees on Thursday, January 5th. Kennebec tied their all-time record high for January with 70 degrees on January 5th.

1880: Snow began falling in Seattle, Washington and would continue for much of the week. When it was over, more than 5 feet of snow was recorded.

1884: One of only two days in history during which the temperature at Louisville, Kentucky, never rose above zero. The low was 20 degrees below with a high of 1 below zero.

1888: Snowfall amounts of 3.5 to 5 inches fell over Sacramento, California. The heaviest snow in recent history was two inches on February 4-5th in 1976.

1892: From the History of Fayetteville Georgia, "Another traumatic event occurred in Fayetteville on the evening of January 5, 1892, about six o'clock in the evening. A terrible tornado or cyclone struck the town of Fayetteville just as many had sat down for dinner. The storm killed three people and injured many more as its raging force destroyed numerous residences, outbuildings, and structures including the academy, as well as killing abundant livestock. The event was written about as far away as Savannah."

1962: Two tornadoes, about 100 yards apart and each making paths about 100 yards wide followed parallel paths from southeast to northwest through the edge of the Crestview, Florida's residential area. These tornadoes killed one and injured 30 others.

1835 - It was a record cold morning in the eastern U.S. The mercury at the Yale Campus in New Haven CT plunged to 23 degrees below zero, and reached 40 below in the Berkshire Hills of Connecticut. (David Ludlum)

1904 - Bitterly cold air gripped the northeastern U.S. Morning lows of -42 degrees at Smethport PA and -34 at River Vale NJ established state records. (The Weather Channel)

1913 - The temperature at the east portal to Strawberry Tunnel reached 50 degrees below zero to tie the record established at Woodruff on February 6, 1899. (David Ludlum)

1982 - A three day rainstorm in the San Francisco area finally came to an end. Marin County and Cruz County were drenched with up to 25 inches of rain, and the Sierra Nevada Range was buried under four to eight feet of snow. The storm claimed at least 36 lives, and caused more than 300 million dollars damage. (Storm Data)

1987 - A massive winter storm spread heavy snow from the southwestern U.S. into the Rockies. In Utah, the Alta ski resort reported a storm total of 42 inches of snow. Winds gusted to 64 mph at Albuquerque NM. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms helped produce heavy snow in the Lower Great Lakes Region. Snow fell at the rate of four to five inches per hour, and snowfall totals ranged up to 69 inches at Highmarket NY. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A strong Pacific cold front produced heavy snow and high winds in Nevada. Winds gusted to 80 mph north of Reno, while up to two feet of snow blanketed the Lake Tahoe ski area. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Central Gulf Coast Region. New Orleans, LA, was drenched with 4.05 inches of rain in 24 hours. An overnight storm blanketed the mountains of northern Utah with up to eleven inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

# Groton Daily Independent

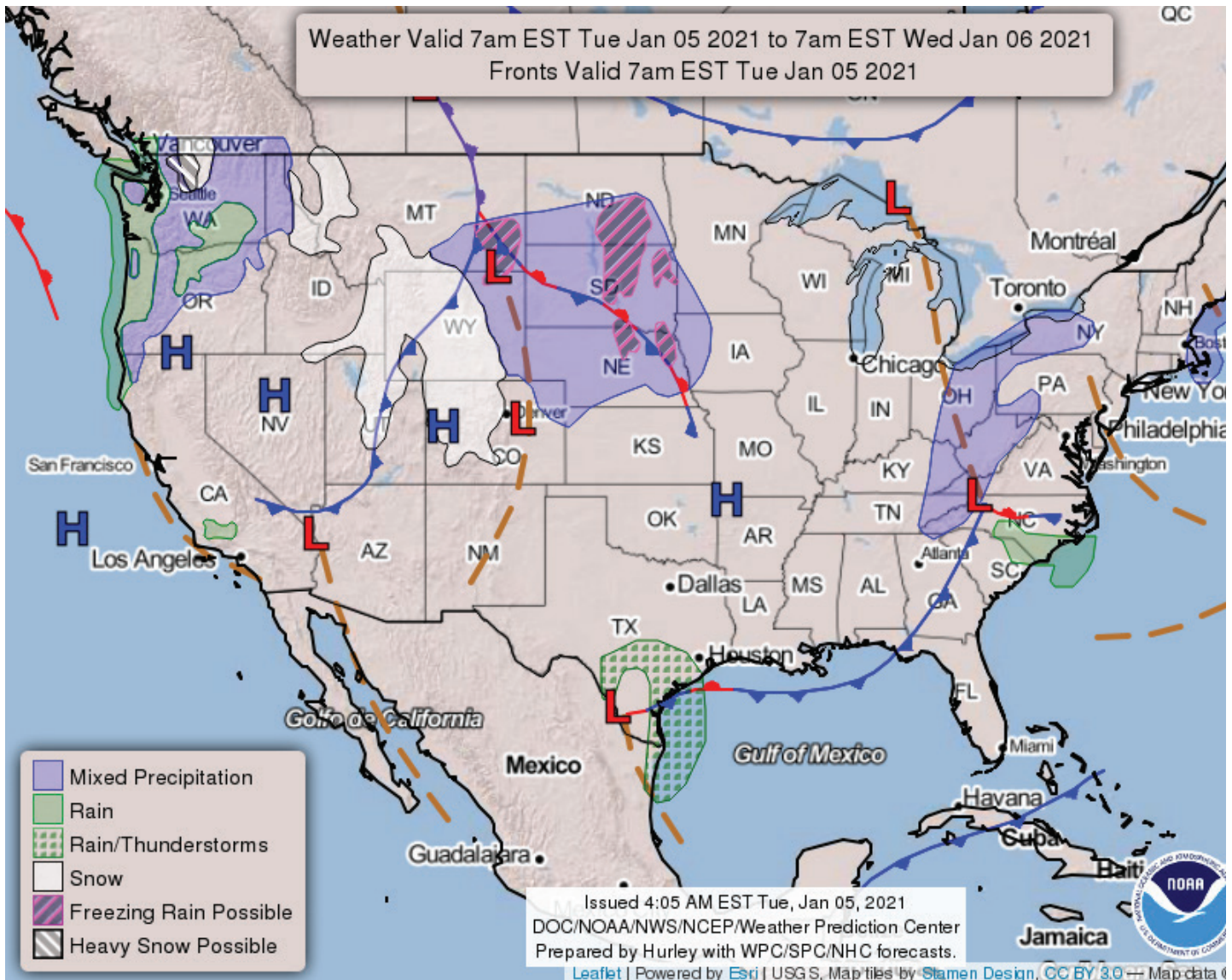
Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 23 of 87

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 39 °F at 4:02 PM**  
**Low Temp: 18 °F at 10:00 PM**  
**Wind: 18 mph at 7:31 AM**  
**Precip:**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 63° in 2012**  
**Record Low: -32 in 1924**  
**Average High: 22°F**  
**Average Low: 2°F**  
**Average Precip in Jan.: 0.07**  
**Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 0.07**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.00**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:06 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.**



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 24 of 87



## WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2021

As we come to the close of this year and face the uncertainties that are before us in the year to come, it is important to pause, listen to, and accept a promise from our God:

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

"In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you search for me with all your heart, you will find me, declares the Lord."

This is one of God's if – then's. There can be no misunderstanding of what He is talking about in this passage of Scripture. God knows our future. He very carefully designed it in our best interest to enable us to find and follow His will. Because He knows our future, He assures us that it can be one of goodness and hope – not one of disaster.

But if we want this future that contains goodness and hope, we must study His Word and go to Him in earnest prayer. He assures us that He will listen to us IF we search for Him with all of our hearts and THEN are obedient to and follow Him. IF we do this, THEN He will bless us.

Perhaps we have prayed and even searched for Him in years past, but did not do so with all our heart. With God, it is always IF you obey me, THEN you can count on Me.

Prayer: Lord, may we come to You this year with sincerity and singleness of heart to find Your plans. Give us Your courage to seek, find, and follow You in our lives. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scriptures For Today: Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 25 of 87

News from the  Associated Press

## Monday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Christian 65, Waverly-South Shore 38

Colome 59, Avon 33

DeSmet 71, Deuel 41

Elkton-Lake Benton 67, Baltic 51

Waubay/Summit 46, Britton-Hecla 31

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Avon 52, Colome 48

Colman-Egan 56, Howard 43

DeSmet 51, Deuel 29

Irene-Wakonda 54, Canistota 45

Richardton-Taylor, N.D. 45, McIntosh 27

Sioux City, East, Iowa 44, Yankton 31

St. Thomas More 61, Belle Fourche 34

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

## Dentlinger carries S. Dakota St. over Mount Marty 93-50

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Matt Dentlinger had 21 points as South Dakota State easily defeated NAIA member Mount Marty 93-50 on Monday night.

Luke Appel and David Wingett had 16 points for South Dakota State (6-3). Baylor Scheierman had 12 points and 14 rebounds.

The late added game was the home opener for the Jackrabbits and their first game since Dec. 12.

Lincoln Jordre had three blocks for the Lancers.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and [http://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](http://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

This was generated by Automated Insights, <http://www.automatedinsights.com/ap>, using data from STATS LLC, <https://www.stats.com>

## Fast rollout of virus vaccine trials reveals tribal distrust

By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — The news came during a hopeful time on the largest Native American reservation.

Daily coronavirus cases were in the single digits, down from a springtime peak of 238 that made the Navajo Nation a U.S. hot spot. The tribe, wanting to ensure a COVID-19 vaccine would be effective for its people, said it would welcome Pfizer clinical trials on its reservation spanning Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

Right away, tribal members accused their government of allowing them to be guinea pigs, pointing to painful times in the past when Native Americans didn't consent to medical testing or weren't fully informed about procedures.

A Navajo Nation review board gave the study quicker approval than normal after researchers with Johns Hopkins University's Center for American Indian Health made the case for diversity. Without Native volunteers, how would they know if tribal members responded to vaccines the same as others?

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 26 of 87

"Unfortunately, Native Americans have effectively been denied the opportunity to participate in these clinical trials because almost all of the study sites are in large, urban areas that have not done effective outreach to Native Americans," said Dr. Laura Hammitt of Johns Hopkins.

About 460 Native Americans participated in the trials for the vaccine by Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech, including Navajos. The enrollment reflects a growing understanding of the role that people of color play in vaccine development and the push to rapidly deploy it to curb infections among populations that have been disproportionately affected by the virus.

Yet, few of the country's 574 federally recognized tribes have signed on for the studies, a hesitation often rooted in suspicion and distrust. Many tribes also require several layers of approval for clinical trials, a challenge researchers aren't always willing to overcome and don't face in the states.

While vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna Inc. roll out across Indian Country, others are being studied.

In the Pacific Northwest, the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Indian Tribe plan to participate in a vaccine trial from another company, Novavax Inc. A Cheyenne River Sioux researcher plans to enroll Native Americans and others in South Dakota in the Novavax trial and another by Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline.

On the Navajo Nation, Arvena Peshlakai, her husband, Melvin, and their daughter Quortnii volunteered for the Pfizer trials.

Arvena Peshlakai said the rumors were rampant: Navajos would be injected with the virus, and researchers would use plasma from people who got COVID-19.

She was assured that wasn't happening and let the words of her parents and grandparents guide her: Don't let our struggles be your struggles, begin with our triumphs.

"What else am I supposed to do? Just sit back and say, 'No, I don't trust them' and not try something new to see if we can find a breakthrough?" Peshlakai said. "We have to do something, we can't just sit by and wait and hope and pray."

She overcame her fear of needles to get the doses and keeps track of her well-being daily on an app. As trial participants, the family can get the vaccine if they initially received a placebo.

The Pfizer trials among the Navajo and White Mountain Apache tribes enrolled 275 people, about 80% of them Native American. Hammitt said enough people participated to compare immune responses in Native patients to others.

Vaccine trials nationwide have been moving quickly, which doesn't always align with tribal guidelines on considering research proposals.

"It must be done with respect for tribal sovereignty and knowing that each individual has truly been given informed consent," said Abigail Echo-Hawk, director of the Urban Indian Health Institute in Seattle.

It helped that Johns Hopkins has a decadeslong history with the Navajos and Apaches, including other clinical trials. Hammitt said the Navajo Human Research Review Board was receptive to a quick review of the vaccine trials because of the devastating impact of the pandemic.

In South Dakota, the Cheyenne River Sioux tribal health committee initially pushed back on Dr. Jeffrey Henderson's proposal for trials of the Novavax vaccine. Henderson, a tribal member, was sent into the community to gauge support.

He expects to get approval from a newly seated tribal council but for now, plans to set up a mobile unit outside the reservation.

"We refuse to do this type of research or any research within the boundaries of a tribe without having explicit approval from the tribe," Henderson said.

In Washington state, the Nooksack tribe is set to begin enrolling volunteers in the Novavax trials Monday, said Dr. Frank James, the tribe's health officer.

"I expect a slow start to it, and we have to get a few brave people who are comfortable with it and then people to follow," he said.

The nearby Lummi Nation is moving forward with a three-part review and approval process for the Novavax trials.

Initial hesitation among the tribe stemmed from a researcher who took photos of Lummi children years ago to develop a tool to diagnose fetal alcohol syndrome but didn't offer any ways to address it, said Dr.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 27 of 87

Dakotah Lane, executive medical director of the Lummi Tribal Health Clinic.

"I had already known and was aware of certainly some distrust with any kind of research within our community," Lane said. "But I also knew the only way out of this pandemic was with access to vaccines."

Other stories about the sterilization of Native American women, noted in a 1976 federal report, and military testing of radioactive iodine on Alaska Natives have bred distrust.

The Havasupai Tribe also settled a lawsuit a decade ago that accused Arizona State University scientists of misusing blood samples meant for diabetes research to study schizophrenia, inbreeding and ancient population migration without the tribe's permission.

That case came to mind when Annette Brown, a Navajo woman, heard about her tribe's willingness to participate in COVID-19 vaccine trials.

"There's this historical distrust when it comes to any type of experimenting," she said. "It's just experience, I don't know that there are many families out there who haven't been touched by some sort of experimentation (or) biological attacks on tribal communities."

Brown has mixed feelings because she previously participated in a vaccine trial with Johns Hopkins.

In separate research, the Johns Hopkins University's Center for American Indian Health determined the first generation of vaccines for bacterial meningitis was less effective among Navajo and Apache children 6 months and younger, Hammitt said. The rate of the disease used to be five to 10 times higher among those children than the general population.

Researchers and doctors in Native American communities also have found that standard doses for medications like blood thinners weren't always the best fit for tribal members.

For Marcia O'Leary, helping with a study that indirectly discovered HPV vaccines don't protect against a strain that's a leading cause of cancer among Native American women in the Great Plains shows the importance of having more Native researchers and being involved in clinical trials.

"We can't wait for this to trickle down," said O'Leary, director of Missouri Breaks, a small Native American-owned research group on the Cheyenne River Sioux reservation. "It seems like in Indian Country, we keep chasing the ball of health and we never get ahead of it."

---

Fonseca is a member of the AP's Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/FonsecaAP>.

---

This story was first published on Jan. 2, 2021. It was updated on Jan. 4, 2021, to clarify that while researchers overall would like participation in clinical trials to reflect the diversity of the U.S. population, the goal enrollment for the Navajo and White Mountain Apache tribes was 200 to 300 participants, which was met. The story also distinguishes between the clinical trial that Annette Brown participated in and research done by Johns Hopkins University's Center for American Indian Health.

## **T-Mobile Agrees to Acquire Sprint-branded Wireless Assets from Brookings Municipal Utilities**

BELLEVUE, Wash.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jan 4, 2021--

T-Mobile US, Inc. (NASDAQ: TMUS) announced today that it has reached a definitive agreement to acquire the Sprint-branded wireless operating assets of Brookings Municipal Utilities (BMU) in Brookings, South Dakota. Under the former Sprint brand, BMU operates a network of cell sites and provides wireless and data services to approximately 14,000 customers in Sioux Falls, Watertown, and Brookings, South Dakota and Sioux City, Iowa. The acquisition will further expand T-Mobile's retail distribution and enhance network coverage in the area. The deal includes BMU's wireless network, retail stores, and PCS spectrum.

"T-Mobile is thrilled that we will soon be able to deliver all the benefits of our Supercharged Un-Carrier and America's largest 5G network to our newest wireless customers in southeastern South Dakota and Western Iowa," said Mike Sievert, President & Chief Executive Officer at T-Mobile. "Once fully integrated, we will expand our retail footprint in the area and bring T-Mobile's award-winning approach to service to

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 28 of 87

these customers. We can't wait to serve them!"

Following the transaction, T-Mobile expects to fully integrate the acquired assets into T-Mobile's network and retail distribution in the region. The consummation of the transaction is subject to certain customary closing conditions and we expect the closing to occur in Q1 2021.

About T-Mobile

T-Mobile US, Inc. (NASDAQ: TMUS) is America's supercharged Un-carrier, delivering an advanced 4G LTE and transformative nationwide 5G network that will offer reliable connectivity for all. T-Mobile's customers benefit from its unmatched combination of value and quality, unwavering obsession with offering them the best possible service experience and undisputable drive for disruption that creates competition and innovation in wireless and beyond. Based in Bellevue, Wash., T-Mobile provides services through its subsidiaries and operates its flagship brands, T-Mobile, Metro by T-Mobile and Sprint. For more information please visit: <http://www.t-mobile.com>.

View source version on businesswire.com:<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210104005794/en/>

CONTACT: T-Mobile US Media Relations

[MediaRelations@T-Mobile.com](mailto:MediaRelations@T-Mobile.com)

or

Investor Relations

[investor.relations@t-mobile.com](mailto:investor.relations@t-mobile.com)

KEYWORD: UNITED STATES NORTH AMERICA SOUTH DAKOTA WASHINGTON IOWA

INDUSTRY KEYWORD: MOBILE/WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

SOURCE: T-Mobile US, Inc.

Copyright Business Wire 2021.

PUB: 01/04/2021 04:05 PM/DISC: 01/04/2021 04:05 PM

<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210104005794/en/>

## South Dakota hospital plans increased virus testing

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — One of South Dakota's largest hospital systems announced Monday it is planning to increase testing for the coronavirus, as the state saw a drop in new cases, but a high positivity rate of testing.

Monument Health, the largest health care provider in western South Dakota, plans to test more people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, including running mass testing events. Hospital administrators said the availability of testing supplies has improved in recent weeks.

The Department of Health reported 111 new coronavirus infections and no new deaths Monday after the New Year's holiday weekend, which was the lowest daily tally in three months. But the positivity rate of RT-PCR tests, which detects the virus's genetic material, was over 16%.

Emily Leech, Monument Health's Director of Laboratory Services said that a community's test positivity rate should ideally be below 5%.

"We're doing everything we can to increase testing in our communities," she said in a statement.

Monument said that its volume of testing in December was about half the rate in November, when the state saw a surge of cases.

Over the past two weeks, the rolling average number of daily new cases across the state has decreased by 14.8%, according to Johns Hopkins researchers.

## Midwest economy improving but businesses less optimistic

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The economy continues improving in nine Midwest and Plains states but business leaders are less optimistic after the latest surge in coronavirus cases in the region, according to a new monthly survey released Monday.

The overall index for the region suggests strong growth even though it dipped to 64.1 in December

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 29 of 87

from November's 69. Any score above 50 on the survey's indexes suggests growth, while a score below 50 suggests recession.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey, said the manufacturing sector has been growing steadily since restrictions related to the virus started to be relaxed in the spring, but current activity still remains below the level it was at before the pandemic began.

Goss said the survey's confidence index suggests business leaders are worried about the economy after the recent growth in virus cases across the region. The confidence index dipped into negative territory at 45.8 in December from November's neutral score of 50.

Companies were still hiring last month, but the pace of job growth slowed. The employment index declined to 57.7 in December from November's 63.1. Goss said the region still has 4.7% fewer jobs now than when the pandemic began — a decrease of about 655,000 jobs.

The monthly survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

## Midwest Economy: December state-by-state glance

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Institute for Supply Management, formerly the Purchasing Management Association, began formally surveying its membership in 1931 to gauge business conditions.

The Creighton Economic Forecasting Group uses the same methodology as the national survey to consult supply managers and business leaders. Creighton University economics professor Ernie Goss oversees the report.

The overall index ranges between 0 and 100. Growth neutral is 50, and a figure greater than 50 indicates growth in that factor over the next three to six months. A figure below 50 indicates decline.

Here are the state-by-state results for December:

**Arkansas:** The overall index for Arkansas increased slightly in December to 62.3 from November's 62.2. Components of the index were: new orders at 64.9, production or sales at 60.9, delivery lead time at 76.6, inventories at 52.3, and employment at 56.7. Since the onset of COVID-19 in February, the Arkansas economy has lost a net of 41,000 nonfarm jobs, or 3.2%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Top performing industry for 2020: construction.

**Iowa:** Iowa's overall index remained in positive territory in December though the reading declined to 64.7 from 74.6 in November. Components of the overall index were: new orders at 66.2, production or sales at 62.5, delivery lead time at 83.0, employment at 55.6, and inventories at 57.7. Since the onset of COVID-19 in February, the Iowa economy has lost a net of 78,000 nonfarm jobs, or 4.9%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Top performing industry for 2020: financial activities.

**Kansas:** The state's overall index for December decreased to 55.3 from 60.1 in November. Components of the index were: new orders at 62.7, production or sales at 58.2, delivery lead time at 65.6, employment at 44.2, and inventories at 45.6. Since the onset of COVID-19 in February, the Kansas economy has lost a net of 69,000 nonfarm jobs, or 4.8%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Top performing industry for 2020: construction.

**Minnesota:** The overall index for Minnesota declined in December to 67.6 from 73.2 in November. Components of the overall index were: new orders at 67.3, production or sales at 63.8, delivery lead time at 88.5, inventories at 54.0, and employment at 64.4. Since the onset of COVID-19 in February, the Minnesota economy has lost a net of 195,000 jobs, or 6.5%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Top performing industry for 2020: financial activities.

**Missouri:** The overall index for Missouri dropped to 67.2 in December from November's 75.6. Components of the overall index were: new orders at 65.4, production or sales at 61.5, delivery lead time at 78.9, inventories at 72.0, and employment at 58.3. Since the onset of COVID-19 in February, the Missouri economy has lost a net of 115,000 nonfarm jobs, or 4%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Top performing industry for 2020: construction.

**Nebraska:** Nebraska's overall index for December rose to 67 from 66.8 in November. Components of

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 30 of 87

the index were: new orders at 66.3, production or sales at 62.6, delivery lead time at 83.5, inventories at 61.2, and employment at 61.2. Since the onset of COVID-19 in February, the Nebraska economy has lost a net of 35,000 nonfarm jobs, or 3.4%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Top performing industry for 2020: education & health services.

North Dakota: The overall index for North Dakota increased in December to 62.8 from 57.2 in November. Components of the overall index were: new orders at 64.4, production or sales at 60.3, delivery lead time at 74.2, employment at 55.2, and inventories at 60.0. Since the onset of COVID-19 in February, the North Dakota economy has lost a net of 33,000 nonfarm jobs, or 7.4%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Top performing industry for 2020: financial activities.

Oklahoma: The state's overall index moved above growth neutral in December. The overall index climbed to 55.9 from November's 49.4. Components of the overall index were: new orders at 62.6, production or sales at 58.1, delivery lead time at 65.1, inventories at 44.4, and employment at 49.3. Since the onset of COVID-19 in February, the Oklahoma economy has lost a net of 72,000 nonfarm jobs, or 4.3%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Top performing industry for 2020: financial activities.

South Dakota: The overall index for South Dakota climbed to 76.3 in December from 71.7 in November. Components of the overall index were: new orders at 67.3, production or sales at 63.9, delivery lead time at 88.7, inventories at 96.9, and employment at 64.5. Since the onset of COVID-19 in February, the South Dakota economy has lost a net of 15,000 nonfarm jobs, or 3.5%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Top performing industry for 2020: construction.

## Man sought in fatal Rapid City shooting is arrested

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Police in Rapid City have arrested a man wanted for a fatal shooting on Christmas Eve.

Elias Richard, 21, has been charged with second-degree murder in the death of 31-year-old Vernall Marshall. Richard was arrested over the weekend. It's not clear whether he has hired an attorney to speak for him.

The investigation began after someone called 911 just after 11 p.m. on Dec. 24 to report they heard gunshots. Police said officers arrived and found the victim lying in the street.

Police spokesman Brendyn Medina says Marshall had multiple bullet wounds to his upper body and died at the hospital.

The shooting appears to be linked to a robbery because the three other people are charged with aiding and abetting first-degree robbery in connection with the shooting, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Marshall was the 12th victim of a homicide in 2020 in Rapid City and at least one other death is being investigated as a possible homicide.

## Qatar ruler lands in Saudi Arabia for summit to end blockade

By AYA BATRAWY, ISABEL DEBRE and AMR NABIL Associated Press

AL-ULA, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Qatar's ruling emir arrived in Saudi Arabia and was greeted with an embrace by its crown prince on Tuesday, following an announcement that the kingdom would end its yearslong embargo on the tiny Gulf Arab state.

The decision to open borders was the first major step toward ending the diplomatic crisis that has deeply divided U.S. defense partners, frayed societal ties and torn apart a traditionally clubby alliance of Arab states.

The arrival of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in the kingdom's ancient desert city of Al-Ula was broadcast live on Saudi TV. He was seen disembarking from his plane and being greeted with a hug by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, though both wore face masks due to coronavirus precautions.

The emir is in Al-Ula for an annual summit of Gulf Arab leaders that is expected to produce a détente between Qatar and four Arab states that have boycotted the country and cut transport and diplomatic links with it since mid-2017 over Doha's support for Islamist groups and warm ties with Iran.

The diplomatic breakthrough comes after a final push by the outgoing Trump administration and fellow

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 31 of 87

Gulf state Kuwait to mediate an end to the crisis. It wasn't until late Monday — on the eve of the summit and just ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's swearing in — that the decision to end the spat was announced.

The timing was auspicious: Saudi Arabia may be seeking to both grant the Trump administration a final diplomatic win and remove stumbling blocs to building warm ties with the Biden administration, which is expected to take a firmer stance toward the kingdom.

It was unclear what, if any, significant concessions Qatar had made toward shifting its policies. The boycott largely failed to change Doha's regional posture, instead buoying Sheikh Tamim domestically as patriotic fervor swept through Qatar in support of his resolve.

The boycott also pushed Qatar closer to Saudi rivals Turkey and Iran, which rushed to support the ultra-wealthy Gulf state when it faced shortages in medical and food supplies in the first days of the embargo.

Qatar's only land border, which it relied on for the import of dairy products, construction materials and other goods from Saudi Arabia, has been mostly closed since June 2017, when Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain launched their boycott of the small but influential Persian Gulf country.

While the Saudi decision to open its airspace, land and sea borders with Qatar marks a milestone toward resolving the dispute, the path toward full reconciliation is far from guaranteed. The rift between Abu Dhabi and Doha has been deepest, with the UAE and Qatar at sharp ideological odds.

The UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Gargash, tweeted late Monday that his country was keen to restore Gulf unity but cautioned: "We have more work to do."

Tuesday's summit is expected to see some form of détente between Qatar and the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain, in addition to a signing ceremony with Saudi Arabia. The meeting in Al-Ula would traditionally be chaired by Saudi King Salman, though his son and heir, the crown prince, may instead lead it.

The Qatari emir has only attended the Gulf Cooperation Council summit once — when it was hosted by Kuwait — since the boycott started. He sent an envoy to the following two summits, held in Saudi Arabia.

This year, Egypt's foreign minister is also attending the summit of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, which comprises Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar.

The Saudi move toward reconciliation comes just weeks after President Donald Trump's advisor and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, visited the kingdom and Qatar to secure an end to the rift. Kushner has reportedly been invited to attend the signing ceremony in Al-Ula.

This is the first GCC summit since the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco announced in rapid succession they would normalize ties with Israel, marking a major shift in regional alliances. It is also the first since the longtime leaders of both Oman and Kuwait died, ushering in a new crop of hereditary rulers. The youngest royals at the summit, however, are Sheikh Tamim, 40, and Crown Prince Mohammed, 35.

Saudi Arabia's decision to end the embargo not only underscores the kingdom's assertion of its heavy-weight position among Arab states, but also its regional leadership, which has been at times challenged by the UAE's unilateral and politically shrewd moves.

The kingdom is most concerned with countering Iran, while the UAE's top concern has been blunting any Islamist footprint in the region.

At heart have been shared concerns that Qatar's close relations with Turkey and Iran have undermined regional security. Egypt and the UAE view Qatar and Turkey's support of the Muslim Brotherhood as a security threat and have deemed the group a terrorist organization. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are primarily concerned with Qatar's close ties with Iran.

Those simmering tensions came to a boil in the summer of 2017, when the four countries cut transport and diplomatic links with Qatar to pressure a change in its policies. The boycotting countries made a list of demands on Qatar that included shuttering its flagship Al-Jazeera news network and terminating Turkish military presence in Qatar, which is also home to a major U.S. military base. Qatar has outright rejected the demands, and has denied support of extremists.

State-linked media in the UAE and Qatar lobbed vicious attacks back and forth. The Qataris also alluded to the UAE being behind the hacking of its state-run news agency in 2017, while the UAE's influential ambassador to Washington saw his emails subsequently hacked and leaked.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 32 of 87

The boycott of Qatar had pitted regional U.S. allies against one another at a time when the Trump administration was working to pressure Iran. It also separated families who'd intermarried with Qataris and ended years of visa-free travel for Qataris in parts of the Gulf.

In a sign that hostilities continue to simmer, Qatar protested to the U.N. Security Council last month that Bahraini fighter jets "violated" Qatari airspace in early December. Bahrain, meanwhile, has accused Qatar's coast guard of arbitrarily detaining dozens of Bahraini fishing vessels.

The conflict in Libya is also a contentious issue, with Egypt and the UAE supporting militias fighting a Tripoli-based bloc backed by Turkey and Qatar.

Batrawy and DeBre reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writer Samy Magdy in Cairo contributed to this report.

## Decision day in Georgia with Senate majority at stake

By STEVE PEOPLES and BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia voters are set to decide the balance of power in Congress in a pair of high-stakes Senate runoff elections that will help determine President-elect Joe Biden's capacity to enact what may be the most progressive governing agenda in generations.

Republicans are unified against Biden's plans for health care, environmental protection and civil rights, but some fear that outgoing President Donald Trump's brazen attempts to undermine the integrity of the nation's voting systems may discourage voters in Georgia.

At a rally in northwest Georgia on the eve of Tuesday's runoffs, Trump repeatedly declared that the November elections were plagued by fraud that Republican officials, including his former attorney general and Georgia's elections chief, say did not occur.

The president called Georgia's Republican secretary of state "crazy" and vowed to help defeat him in two years. At the same time, Trump encouraged his supporters to show up in force for Georgia's Tuesday contests.

"You've got to swarm it tomorrow," Trump told thousands of cheering supporters, downplaying the threat of fraud.

Democrats must win both of the state's Senate elections to gain the Senate majority. In that scenario, the Senate would be equally divided 50-50 with Vice President-elect Kamala Harris serving as the tie-breaker for Democrats.

Democrats already secured a narrow House majority and the White House during November's general election.

Even a closely divided Democratic Senate likely won't guarantee Biden everything he wants, given Senate rules that require 60 votes to move most major legislation. But if Democrats lose even one of Tuesday's contests, Biden would have little shot for swift up-or-down votes on his most ambitious plans to expand government-backed health care coverage, strengthen the middle class, address racial inequality and combat climate change. A Republican-controlled Senate also would create a rougher path for Biden's Cabinet picks and judicial nominees.

"Georgia, the whole nation is looking to you. The power is literally in your hands," Biden charged at his own rally in Atlanta earlier Monday. "One state can chart the course, not just for the next four years, but for the next generation."

Georgia's January elections, necessary because no Senate candidates received a majority of the general-election votes, have been unique for many reasons, not least because the contenders essentially ran as teams, even campaigning together sometimes.

One contest features Democrat Raphael Warnock, who serves as the senior pastor of the Atlanta church where slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. grew up and preached. The 51-year-old Black man was raised in public housing and spent most of his adult life preaching in Baptist churches.

Warnock is facing Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler, a 50-year-old former businesswoman who was appointed



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 33 of 87

to the Senate less than a year ago by the state's Republican governor. She is only the second woman to represent Georgia in the Senate, although race has emerged as a campaign focus far more than gender. Loeffler and her allies have seized on some snippets of Warnock's sermons at the historic Black church to cast him as extreme. Dozens of religious and civil rights leaders have pushed back.

The other election pits 71-year-old former business executive David Perdue, who held the Senate seat until his term officially expired on Sunday, against Democrat Jon Ossoff, a former congressional aide and journalist. At just 33 years old, Ossoff would be the Senate's youngest member if elected. The fresh-faced Democrat first rose to national prominence in 2017 when he launched an unsuccessful House special election bid.

Despite fears among some Republicans that Trump's baseless claims of voter fraud could depress turnout, the two GOP candidates have pledged fealty to the president. Perdue on Tuesday said that Trump would "of course" deserve the credit if the Republicans won.

"What the president said last night is, even if you are upset about all of that, you've got to stand up with us and fight," Perdue told "Fox & Friends." "We'll look back on this day if we don't vote and really rue the day that we turned the keys to the kingdom over to the Democrats."

Democrats have hammered Perdue and Loeffler, each among the Senate's wealthiest members, for conspicuously timed personal stock trades after members of Congress received information about the public health and economic threats of COVID-19 as Trump and Republicans downplayed the pandemic. None of the trades has been found to violate the law or Senate ethics, but Warnock and Ossoff have used the moves to cast the Republicans as self-interested and out of touch.

Perdue and Loeffler have answered by lambasting the Democratic slate as certain to usher in a leftward lunge in national policy. Neither Warnock nor Ossoff is a socialist, as Republicans allege. They do, however, support Biden's agenda.

This week's elections mark the formal finale to the turbulent 2020 election season more than two months after the rest of the nation finished voting. The stakes have drawn nearly \$500 million in campaign spending to a once solidly Republican state that now finds itself as the nation's premier battleground.

"It's really about whether an agenda that moves the nation forward can be forged without significant compromise," said Martin Luther King III, the son of the civil rights icon and a Georgia native, who predicted "razor thin" margins on Tuesday. "There are a lot of things that are in the balance."

The results also will help demonstrate whether the sweeping political coalition that fueled Biden's victory was an anti-Trump anomaly or part of a new landscape.

Biden won Georgia's 16 electoral votes by about 12,000 votes out of 5 million cast in November.

Democratic success will likely depend on driving a huge turnout of African Americans, young voters, college-educated voters and women, all groups that helped Biden become the first Democratic presidential candidate since 1992 to win Georgia. Republicans, meanwhile, have been focused on energizing their own base of white men and voters beyond the core of metro Atlanta.

More than 3 million Georgians voted before Tuesday.

The runoff elections come as Trump continues his unprecedented campaign to undermine election results across various states he lost. In a recording of a private phone call made public on Sunday, the president told Georgia's secretary of state to "find" enough votes to give him an outright victory in the state, even after repeated recounts, failed court challenges, and state certification.

Campaigning in Georgia on Monday hours before Trump's visit, Vice President Mike Pence said he has concerns about "voting irregularities." He has also repeatedly described Georgia Republicans as "the last line of defense" against a Democratic takeover in Washington, an implicit acknowledgement that the Trump has indeed lost the election.

Congress is scheduled to vote to certify Biden's victory on Wednesday. In another affirmation of Trump's hold on his fellow Republicans, Loeffler took the stage at Trump's rally and vowed to join the small but growing number of Republicans protesting the count on the Senate floor.

"Look, this president fought for us," she said. "We're fighting for him."

## An 'orchard of bad apples' weighs on new Afghan peace talks

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Afghan negotiators are to resume talks with the Taliban on Tuesday aimed at finding an end to decades of relentless conflict even as hopes wane and frustration and fear grow over a spike in violence across Afghanistan that has combatants on both sides blaming the other.

Torek Farhadi, a former Afghan government advisor, said the government and the Taliban are "two warring minorities," with the Afghan people caught in between — "one says they represent the republic, the other says we want to end foreign occupation and corruption. But the war is (only) about power."

The stop-and-go talks come amid growing doubt over a U.S.-Taliban peace deal brokered by outgoing President Donald Trump. An accelerated withdrawal of U.S. troops ordered by Trump means just 2,500 American soldiers will still be in Afghanistan when President-elect Joe Biden takes office this month.

Biden has advocated keeping a small intelligence-based presence in Afghanistan, but Taliban leaders have flatly rejected any foreign troops. Officials familiar with the U.S.-Taliban peace deal say there is no wiggle room that would allow even a small number of foreign troops to remain.

The Taliban have grown in strength since their ouster in 2001 and today control or hold sway over half the country. But a consensus has emerged that a military victory is impossible for either side.

When the first round of talks began on Sept. 12 — the first time ever the two warring sides met around a negotiating table — they were warned against squandering the opportunity. Failure means a continuation of more than four decades of war, and yet more death and destruction.

### WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS?

Expectations are low. The change in the U.S. administration is likely to drag out the opening days of the talks as both sides wait to see whether Biden will stick to the deal brokered by Trump.

Both the Afghan government and Taliban have proposed agenda items. In this round, the two sides will decide which items can be combined as well as how to discuss separate items.

"The initial opportunity is that several items of the agenda are similar and would be easy to make progress on," says Nader Nadery, a member of the government's negotiation team, without giving specifics. Nadery, however, warned that spiraling violence will increase public pressure on government negotiators that could derail talks.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CONTENTIOUS ISSUES?

Perhaps one of the trickiest items is a power-sharing agreement. There is little evidence that the Kabul government will be willing to share power or that the Taliban will be flexible on who would be acceptable in a transitional administration.

The government wants a cease-fire to be on the top of the agenda, while the Taliban want to discuss power-sharing with some commitment to how a post-war Afghanistan might look. Then there is the issue of how to eventually disarm the Taliban and militias loyal to warlords, some aligned with the government, some in opposition.

Taliban spokesman Mohammad Naeem told The Associated Press that the Taliban were ready for a resumption of the negotiations, adding that a cease-fire is one of the agenda items, without elaborating.

The sides must also work out how to preserve the rights of minorities and women and make constitutional amendments. The Taliban demand that any rights be "in keeping with Islamic teachings" — a vague formula that activists fear will be used to restrict freedoms.

Anas Haqqani, a member of the Taliban negotiating team, seemed to indicate in a tweet last month that he had problems with some of the so-called progressive changes in Afghanistan, calling them foreign, Western ideas. He said anything that is against Islamic and Afghan culture should "go away."

### WHAT ARE AFGHANS SAYING?

For many, peace seems like a distant dream. A number of people interviewed in Kabul saw their country in a downward spiral, shattered by near-daily explosions and marauding criminal gangs that have made the streets dangerous after dark.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 35 of 87

Shahzia Ahmadi, a 32-year old teacher and mother of four, said she won't let her 13-year-old son go shopping for fear of kidnapers who demand ransoms between \$50 and \$50,000.

Ahmad Zia, a 38-year old shopkeeper, used to stay open till midnight. Not anymore. He said he doesn't stay out after 8 p.m. As for peace, Zia wasn't optimistic. "I haven't seen peace or a peaceful day in my life. I don't know really about the future of this country, but I am so disappointed," he said.

A soaring crime rate and relentless attacks have everyone frightened, said Mohammed Sharif, a 38-year-old employee at the Higher Education Ministry. He said he hopes the two sides can reach some result "because Afghans can no longer deal with all these many problems."

## WHO ARE THE SPOILERS?

Escalating violence has all sides pointing the finger at each other. The government blames the Taliban for a series of targeted killings against activists, journalists, judges and lawyers. The Taliban have denied some of the attacks, On Monday, Zabihullah Mujahed, the Taliban spokesman, accused the U.S. of striking Taliban strongholds that had no military significance.

A debunked video that some analysts accused the government of making to damn the Taliban showed three bearded men, carrying a Taliban flag and saying the Taliban, not the Islamic State group, carried out an attack on Kabul University in December that killed 25 students and teachers. The Taliban denied the attack. IS claimed responsibility and has also in recent months stepped up its assaults in Kabul, often targeting the educated and minority Shiites.

Farhadi, the former government adviser, said any number of players could wreck the peace process — Taliban hard-liners who want the talks to fail; warlords who want to keep their weapons; corrupt officials who want to protect their wealth and government officials loath to share power.

Distrust runs deep. One Taliban official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said the Taliban leadership was skeptical the Afghan government wanted peace, preferring the status quo and staying in power. A cease-fire, he said, could be easily worked out, once "our leaders are convinced that the other side is sincere."

Afghanistan's neighbors also wield influence. Washington's envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, was in Pakistan on Monday and while no details were released, it seems likely he was there to seek Pakistan's help to get the Taliban into an agreement to reduce violence. Khalilzad was in Kabul on Tuesday and was later to travel to Doha, according to the State Department.

"Sadly, there's no shortage of potential spoilers," said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center.

"We're not talking about one bad apple; we're talking about a whole orchard of bad apples with incentives to stonewall at best and sabotage at worst."

---

Associated Press writer Rahim Faiez in Kabul, Afghanistan, contributed to this report.

## It's lockdown No. 3 for England, at least six weeks at home

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — England is entering a third national lockdown that will last at least six weeks, as authorities struggle to stem a surge in COVID-19 infections that threatens to overwhelm hospitals around the U.K.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced a tough new stay-at-home order for England that takes effect at midnight Tuesday and won't be reviewed until at least mid-February. Few in England expect any relief until after the traditional late February school break. Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon also imposed a lockdown that began Tuesday.

Johnson and Sturgeon said the restrictions were needed to protect the hard-pressed National Health Service as a new, more contagious variant of coronavirus sweeps across Britain. On Monday, hospitals in England were treating 26,626 COVID-19 patients, 40% more than during the first peak in mid-April.

"The weeks ahead will be the hardest yet, but I really do believe that we are entering the last phase of the struggle," Johnson said in an address to the nation Monday night. "Because with every jab that goes

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 36 of 87

into our arms, we are tilting the odds against COVID and in favor of the British people.”

Many U.K. hospitals have already been forced to cancel elective surgeries and the strain of responding to the pandemic may soon delay cancer surgery and limit intensive care services for patients without COVID-19. Intensive care units are full and spilling over, said Siva Anandaciva, chief analyst of the King's Fund, a health and social care think-tank.

“It’s not hyperbole to say that the (National Health Service) is going through probably the toughest time in living memory,” he told The Associated Press. Siva said some emergency rooms have waits of 12 hours.

“I was speaking to an emergency care physician from London last week, and she was saying that half of her shift was spent delivering care in ambulances because they couldn’t get the patients into the emergency department,” he said. “So you put that all together and you paint a picture of the health service that’s under incredible pressure.”

Public health officials hope the new lockdown will reduce the strains on the NHS while they roll out a national vaccination program that targets older people, healthcare workers and those with conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. Britain has approved vaccine shots from two different manufacturers so far, one from Pfizer-BioNTech and the other from Oxford University and AstraZeneca.

The government hopes to give a first dose of vaccine to everyone in its top four priority groups, or 13 million people, by the middle of February, Johnson said.

Johnson announced the lockdown after the chief medical officers of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales raised the U.K.-wide COVID-19 threat assessment to the highest level. The health system is already under “immense pressure,” and there is a risk that the NHS in some areas may be “overwhelmed” within 21 days, they said.

The new measures are similar to those imposed last spring, with people being told to work from home unless it’s impossible to do so, and to leave home only for exercise or essential trips such as grocery shopping. Schools across England were ordered to close their doors and shift to online instruction beginning Tuesday. University students won’t return to campus until at least mid-February.

Beginning Wednesday, all nonessential shops and personal care services like hairdressers will be closed in England. Restaurants will be allowed to offer takeout services only.

New COVID-19 infections have soared in recent weeks as public health officials struggled to contain the new variant, which the government says is 50% to 70% more contagious.

The number of confirmed new daily infections in the past seven days jumped 50% from the previous week, and coronavirus-related deaths rose 21% in the same period.

Britain has reported some 75,500 virus-related deaths, one of the highest tallies in Europe.

— Follow AP’s pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>, <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## **EXPLAINER: Biden’s Iran problem is getting worse by the day**

By MATTHEW LEE, ROBERT BURNS and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden has an Iran problem. And, it’s getting more complicated by the day.

Thanks to provocative moves by Iran and less-than-coherent actions by the outgoing Trump administration, the president-elect is facing an increasingly uncertain situation when it comes to Iran, a decades-long American nemesis that has been a target of blame for much of the Middle East’s instability.

In the past week alone, President Donald Trump’s team has dispatched B-52 bombers to the Persian Gulf in response to alleged Iranian attack planning and reversed an order to bring home the USS Nimitz, the only U.S. aircraft carrier in the region.

On Monday, Iran not only announced it had resumed advanced uranium enrichment in violation of the 2015 nuclear deal but also seized a South Korean-flagged oil tanker and its crew. This combustible combination coming just two weeks before the president-elect’s inauguration threatens to derail or at least delay Biden’s hopes to return the U.S. to the nuclear accord that Trump withdrew from in 2018.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 37 of 87

A look at the latest developments:

**DOES THIS AMOUNT TO A DANGEROUS ESCALATION OF TENSIONS?**

Concerns have run high for some weeks about Iran stoking tensions, particularly around the Jan. 3 one-year anniversary of the U.S. killing of a top Iranian general in Iraq. U.S. officials have been on heightened alert for possible retaliation from Iran, including from allied militia in Iraq that have previously launched rockets at U.S. facilities in the country.

Although neither the enrichment announcement nor the seizure of the South Korean-flagged ship appeared linked to the death of the general, the two moves did raise tensions in the region, which has long been unpredictable.

**DOES MILITARY ACTION SEEM LIKELY?**

Part of the worry is that a single wrong move — or intentional provocation — has the potential to trigger war.

There is no sign the U.S. is planning an attack on Iran, although Trump has said he would respond to any attack by Iran or its affiliated militias in Iraq that resulted in the death of an American. The U.S. military has long had a wide variety of weapons and troops in the Middle East that could be called on if hostilities broke out. But Trump himself has derided the idea of getting further mired in Middle East wars.

The scenario that worries U.S. military officials is Iran conducting an attack, either inside Iraq or elsewhere in the Gulf region, that would prompt Trump to retaliate, leading to escalation that could spark a wider war. That is part of the reason the U.S. has kept an aircraft carrier in the region on a near-continuous basis since May 2019, when the White House first asserted that Iran was planning attacks on U.S. personnel.

**WHY WOULD THE NIMITZ BE ORDERED HOME, THEN SENT BACK?**

The highly unusual Nimitz flip-flop by the acting secretary of defense, Christopher Miller, seemed to undercut U.S. Central Command's efforts to convince Iran that it would not pay to launch an attack on U.S. forces.

The huge vessel, with a complement of attack and support aircraft, was literally leaving the region when it received word to turn around and head back.

Sending the Nimitz home had been on the table for weeks, since the carrier was on a lengthy deployment and was scheduled to be home by the end of 2020. Its tour was extended by a few weeks to provide backup for U.S. troop withdrawals in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. But as tensions with Iran rose in mid-December, Central Command wanted to keep the Nimitz nearby. Instead, on Dec. 31, Miller announced that he had ordered it to return home. Three days later, he reversed himself and said it would stay.

Cancelling the go-home order for the Nimitz took some defense officials by surprise, suggesting that the decision may have been made at the White House rather than as a result of new arguments from military officers.

**WHAT'S THE POINT OF FLYING B-52 BOMBERS IN THE GULF?**

These long-range bomber flights aren't commonplace, but they've become a bit more routine in recent weeks as a show of military might. There have been three B-52 bomber missions to the region in less than two months, most recently on Dec. 30.

The roundtrip flights from the United States are meant to show how quickly bombers can get to the area. They can be equipped with either conventional or nuclear missiles. Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the top U.S. commander for the Middle East, made the message clear this week, saying, "We do not seek conflict, but no one should underestimate our ability to defend our forces or to act decisively in response to any attack."

**WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR BIDEN'S IRAN POLICY?**

Biden's transition team has declined to comment in detail about the latest developments and what they may mean for their plans. But, Biden and his top national security aides have laid out their approach to Iran in broad strokes. Top of that list is bringing Iran back into compliance with the nuclear deal and then expanding that pact to take into account non-nuclear behavior that wasn't covered by the initial agreement.

Iran, however, has said it will only return to compliance if the U.S. rejoins the deal and rescinds sanctions

that Trump reimposed over the past two years. At the same time, Biden aides have said Iran cannot win sanctions relief unless and until it respects the deal.

Iran's latest actions, coupled with the Trump administration's movement of forces, complicate diplomacy and raise the risk of miscalculation, particularly as tensions continue to run high between Iran and its neighbors.

The increased tensions, which have triggered the highest alert levels for U.S. personnel in Iraq, may make it difficult for the incoming Biden administration to pivot the military more aggressively toward Russia and China.

## Just 1% of Californians immunized amid slow vaccine rollout

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Distribution hiccups and logistical challenges have slowed the initial coronavirus vaccine rollout in California, setting a pace that's "not good enough," Gov. Gavin Newsom said.

The state is trying to execute the massive immunization campaign "with a sense of urgency that is required of this moment and the urgency that people demand," but so far only about 1% of California's 40 million residents have been vaccinated, the Democratic governor said.

The 454,000 doses of vaccine that have been administered in California represent just a third of the more than nearly 1.3 million received in the state so far, according to the California Department of Public Health.

Across the country, the pace of immunizations has gone slower than planned due to logistical hurdles and differing approaches across states and counties. On Monday, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said nearly 4.6 million shots have been dispensed.

Newsom's comments came Monday as the state's death toll topped 26,500 and confirmed cases neared 2.4 million since the pandemic began. The state's swamped hospitals held more than 22,000 coronavirus patients, including nearly 4,700 in intensive care units, the Department of Public Health said.

Even as he acknowledged the state must do better, Newsom sought to shift some responsibility for the slow rollout, noting "the vaccines don't arrive magically in some state facility."

Dr. Mark Ghaly, secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency, said the state assigns the number of doses that local health jurisdictions will receive after getting an allocation from the federal government. The vaccine is then shipped directly to entities like hospitals or local public health offices. Pfizer distributes its vaccine directly, while Moderna uses the pharmaceutical company McKesson as an intermediary, which initially led to slow communication, Newsom said.

California is working to expand the list of sites where the vaccine can be distributed to include pharmacies, clinics and dental offices. Officials are also completing a survey of health care workers to find out how many of them do not want to take the vaccine, in response to anecdotal evidence that some are refusing it.

While the state wants to make sure no one is jumping ahead in the line, Newsom said he wants to give providers the flexibility to distribute doses to people not on the priority list if doses are at risk of going to waste.

"We are working hard to make sure that 100% of what we get, we get out as quickly as possible," Ghaly said.

Meanwhile, most of the state's population remains under a broad stay-at-home order as ICU capacity dwindles. In hard-hit Los Angeles County, the total COVID-19 death toll has reached 10,850 and confirmed cases topped 818,000. The county reported more than 7,700 people hospitalized, including 21% in ICUs.

County health officials fear the incoming Christmas and New Year's surge. The additional Thanksgiving cases have swamped hospitals, forcing them to treat patients in hallways, ambulances and the gift shop, and forced an oxygen shortage. The California National Guard is contributing freezer trucks to help store bodies as hospitals run out of space.

Hospitals are so overwhelmed that last week the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency issued directives that ambulances should stop transporting patients to hospitals if they have virtually no chance of surviving, including those whose hearts and breathing have stopped and who couldn't

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 39 of 87

be resuscitated by paramedics.

The agency also issued a directive Monday directing ambulance crews to administer less oxygen. Supplies have been strained because of the pandemic.

Some older hospitals in Southern California have oxygen systems that can't handle the demand, and the state is contracting with the Army Corps of Engineers to upgrade the systems. Giant oxygen containers may also be placed in hospital parking lots as back ups.

The county is also working to get more vaccines into skilled nursing facilities. County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said 206 facilities have received their vaccine doses and will administer the shots themselves and 60 more have asked for help in giving the doses.

There are a handful of others, among the county's more than 300 such facilities, however, that have not yet picked up their allocations or had their shipments delivered. Ferrer said those facilities need to start the process immediately.

"We do need the vaccinations to get into people's arms at a much faster clip," she said. "It's not been an easy process."

Elsewhere, organizations representing actors, commercial advertisers, advertising agencies and independent film and television producers recommended a hold on in-person production in Southern California.

The hold would last until mid-January, according to a statement by the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Joint Policy Committee, which represents commercial advertisers and ad agencies. The Producers Guild of America made a similar plea.

Major studios are already on a production hiatus until the middle of this month.

---

Associated Press writers Christopher Weber, John Antczak and Stefanie Dazio in Los Angeles and Adam Beam in Sacramento contributed.

## **Analysis: With call, Trump shows no limit to his power grab**

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — President Donald Trump's ongoing efforts to overturn the 2020 election results — laid out in stark detail in an hourlong weekend phone call with a Georgia election official — are demonstrating his unrestrained determination to maintain a grip on power no matter the consequences for the nation's democratic traditions.

Trump, in a Saturday phone call, pressed Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" enough votes to overturn Joe Biden's win in the state's presidential election. The president repeatedly cited disproven claims of fraud and raised the prospect of a "criminal offense" if officials did not change the vote count, according to a recording of the conversation.

Trump has ventured into uncharted and dangerous territory since his Nov. 3 defeat, becoming the first president who lost an election to try to hang onto his office by rejecting the will of the voters and casting aside results of the Electoral College enshrined in the Constitution.

Trump's refusal to concede, undermining the democratic tradition of a peaceful transfer of power and hindering the transition to a Biden administration, is particularly risky for the nation when it is grappling with a surging pandemic that has killed more than 350,000 Americans. Paying little heed to the virus in recent weeks, the president has largely abdicated day-to-day governing to instead focus on his efforts to cling to power.

On the phone call, Trump peddled anew conspiracy theories, disinformation and outright lies, insisting that he won Georgia despite multiple recounts that show the contrary. He repeatedly argued that Raffensperger, a fellow Republican, could change the certified results.

"All I want to do is this. I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have," Trump said. "Because we won the state."

Biden won Georgia by 11,779 votes.

The call showcased Trump's evolution since Nov. 3. At first, he privately accepted that he had been

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 40 of 87

beaten even as he publicly protested, hoping to show his loyal supporters that he was still fighting while eyeing his own future, politically and financially.

But as the weeks have gone on, Trump has embraced the narrative that his victory was stolen. His shrinking inner circle is now largely populated by those peddling conspiracy theories. The president lives in a media echo chamber made up of conservative television and social media voices amplifying his claims of fraud.

Asked if he felt like the president was pressuring him to do something illegal, Raffensperger told The Associated Press on Monday: "I think he was looking for any kind of advantage he could get, and I just don't see how he's going to get it."

Raffensperger added that Georgia's presidential votes were counted three times — first right after the election, then in an audit that hand tallied the results and finally in a machine recount at Trump's request.

"If they support a challenge of the electors for Georgia, they're wrong, dead wrong," Raffensperger said. Members of Congress will have to make a decision about the results in the other states, he added, "but in Georgia, we did get it right. I'm not happy with the result, as a Republican, but it is the right result based on the numbers that we saw cast."

Trump's renewed intervention and his persistent and unfounded claims of fraud come nearly two weeks before he leaves office and in the leadup to twin runoff elections in Georgia on Tuesday that will determine political control of the U.S. Senate.

It also added intrigue ahead of Trump's rally in Georgia on Monday night — likely the last of his term — in which he stumped for the two Republican candidates. In a rage after the Raffensperger call, Trump floated the idea of pulling out of the rally, which could have been devastating to GOP chances in what are expected to be a pair of razor-thin races.

But Trump was persuaded to go ahead with the rally as a stage from which to reiterate his claims of election fraud and to present, as he tweeted Monday, the "real numbers" from the race. Republicans worried that Trump might focus on himself and depress turnout by undermining faith in the runoff elections and not promoting the two GOP candidates.

In the end, Trump split his time rehashing many of the same debunked grievances he made days earlier in the Raffensperger call, while also urging his supporters to swamp the polls on behalf of Sen. Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue in races he said would determine the "fate of our country."

Trump also signaled he had no intention of dropping his election challenges even after Wednesday's counting of the electoral votes, urging the crowd to watch for new revelations over the next "couple weeks" and vowing: "They're not taking this White House. We're going to fight like hell, I'll tell you right now."

Raffensperger reiterated his frustration with disinformation that has proliferated since the election, much of it emanating from the Oval Office. He expressed fears that Trump's baseless claims would not only undermine the democratic process but could hurt Republicans' chances. People wonder about the best way to vote after false information has caused them to distrust both absentee ballots and the state's voting machines, he said.

"That is not a good message for you to ever get out to your base," he said.

Egged on by Trump, a dozen Republican senators have announced that they would support up to 100 House colleagues in challenging the Electoral College certification process on Wednesday. Wary of Trump's Twitter account and hold over their party's base, many other Republicans were slow to speak out, allowing the president to sow doubt for weeks and undermine Biden's legitimacy with much of the population.

Among those who spoke out Monday, Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, a member of the GOP House leadership team, deemed the president's call "deeply troubling." GOP Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania said the call was "a new low in this whole futile and sorry episode." He commended election officials "who have discharged their duties with integrity over the past two months while weathering relentless pressure, disinformation, and attacks from the president and his campaign."

Audio snippets of the conversation were first posted online by The Washington Post. The AP obtained the full audio of Trump's conversation with Georgia officials from a person on the call. The AP has a policy



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 41 of 87

of not amplifying disinformation and unproven allegations. It annotated a transcript of the call with fact check material.

Various election officials across the country and Trump's former attorney general, William Barr, have said there was no widespread fraud in the election. Republican governors in Arizona and Georgia, battlegrounds crucial to Biden's victory, have also vouched for the integrity of their state elections.

Nearly all the legal challenges from Trump and his allies have been dismissed by judges, including two tossed by the Supreme Court, which has three Trump-nominated justices.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jonathan Lemire has covered the White House and politics for The Associated Press since 2013. Kate Brumback has reported from Atlanta for the AP since 2008.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Jeff Amy in Atlanta, Kevin Freking in Dalton, Georgia, and Lisa Mascaro in Washington contributed to this report.

## South Korean tanker was boarded by armed Iran Guard forces

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

SEOUL (AP) — Armed Iranian Revolutionary Guard troops stormed a South Korean tanker and forced the ship to change course and travel to Iran, the vessel's owner said Tuesday, the latest maritime seizure by Tehran amid heightened tensions with the West over its nuclear program.

The military raid on Monday on the MT Hankuk Chemi was at odds with Iranian explanations that they stopped the vessel for polluting the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Instead, it appeared the Islamic Republic sought to increase its leverage over Seoul ahead of negotiations over billions of dollars in Iranian assets frozen in South Korean banks amid a U.S. pressure campaign targeting Iran.

An Iranian government spokesman, when asked on Tuesday about the seizure, offered Tehran's bluntest acknowledgement yet of a link with the frozen assets.

"If anybody is to be called a hostage taker, it is the South Korean government that has taken our more than \$7 billion hostage under a futile pretext," spokesman Ali Rabiei said.

Iran on Monday also began enriching uranium up to 20%, a small technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%, at its underground Fordo facility. That move appeared aimed at pressuring the U.S. in the final days of President Donald Trump's administration, which unilaterally withdrew from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Later on Tuesday, comments by the head of Iran's civilian nuclear program suggested Tehran's current production of uranium enriched to 20% wouldn't reach levels needed for a nuclear weapon for over two years, potentially giving time for negotiations under President-elect Joe Biden.

An official at DM Shipping Co. Ltd. of Busan, South Korea, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity as he wasn't authorized to talk to journalists, offered details of the Hankuk Chemi's seizure. The vessel had been traveling from Jubail, Saudi Arabia, to Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates when Iranian forces reached the ship and said they would board it.

Initially, Iranian forces said they wanted to run an unspecified check on the ship, the official said. As the vessel's captain spoke to company security officials back in South Korea, armed Iranian troops stormed the tanker as an Iranian helicopter flew overhead, the official said. The troops demanded the captain sail the tanker into Iranian waters over an unspecified investigation and refused to explain themselves, the official added.

The company has since been unable to reach the captain, the official said. Security cameras installed on the ship that initially relayed footage on the scene on the deck to the company are now turned off, the official said.

After the company lost contact with the captain, the company received an anti-piracy security alert notice, suggesting the captain activated an onboard warning system, the official said. It remains unclear if the ship tried to call for outside assistance.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 42 of 87

The U.S. Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet routinely patrols the area along with an American-led coalition monitoring the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of the world's oil passes. A separate European-led effort also operates there as well.

The official denied the vessel had been polluting the waters.

In past months Iran has sought to escalate pressure on South Korea to unlock some \$7 billion in frozen assets from oil sales earned before the Trump administration tightened sanctions on the country's oil exports.

The head of Iran's central bank recently announced that the country was seeking to use funds tied up in a South Korean bank to purchase coronavirus vaccines through COVAX, an international program designed to distribute COVID-19 vaccines to participating countries.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday it plans to dispatch a delegation of officials to Iran for talks on securing the early release of the ship and its crew members. The crew included sailors from Indonesia, Myanmar, South Korea and Vietnam, according to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. South Korea's Defense Ministry said it was sending its anti-piracy unit to near the Strait of Hormuz — a 4,400-ton-class destroyer with about 300 troops.

South Korea's presidential office said Tuesday it views Iran's ship seizure "very gravely."

Foreign Ministry's spokesman Choi Young-sam said Iranian officials have assured South Korea that the ship's crew were all safe. He said an Iran-based South Korean diplomat has been dispatched to the location of the detained ship.

The U.S. State Department joined South Korea in calling for the tanker's immediate release, accusing Iran of threatening "navigational rights and freedoms" in the Persian Gulf in order to "extort the international community into relieving the pressure of sanctions."

Last year, Iran similarly seized a British-flagged oil tanker and held it for months after one of its tankers was held off Gibraltar.

Meanwhile in Tehran, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran told state television that the Islamic Republic's current production of 20%-enriched uranium would be around 9 kilograms (20 pounds) a month.

The comments by Ali Akbar Salehi mean that Iran would need over two years at that rate to have the 240 kilograms (530 pounds) experts say is needed to reprocess to weapons-grade levels of 90%. Salehi said Iran also was working to install newer, faster centrifuges at its facilities.

Also Tuesday, the Iranian military began a wide-ranging, two-day aerial drill in the country's north, state media reported, featuring combat and surveillance unmanned aircraft, as well as naval drones dispatched from vessels in Iran's southern waters. State TV broadcast footage of scores of drones on a runway in the northern province of Semnan near the vast Kavir Desert.

Iran has previously conducted drills with military drones; it routinely releases footage from surveillance drones of U.S. aircraft carriers passing through the Persian Gulf. This week's drill also incorporates modern "suicide drones" that hover over a battlefield before diving down to a target, the TV report said.

---

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writers Nasser Karimi and Amir Vahdat in Tehran, Iran; and Isabel DeBre in Dubai contributed to this report.

## The Latest: Danes: Up to 6-week delay OK for 2nd shot

By The Associated Press undefined

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Danish health authorities will allow a wait of up to six weeks before administering a second dose of a coronavirus vaccine, but say the original guidelines of waiting only three to four weeks to deliver a second shot should be followed whenever possible.

Soeren Brostroem, head of the Danish Health Authority, said his agency and the Danish Medicines Agency have been scrutinizing vaccine data. Denmark is part of the European Union, which officially kicked off its vaccination programs on Dec. 27 using the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine, which requires two shots.

"We can see in the documentation that it can take up to six weeks between each injection. We will add

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 43 of 87

this to our updated guidelines," Brostroem told Danish news agency Ritzau. "If you go longer than six weeks, we cannot see the scientific evidence that you are protected with certainty."

Britain, in an effort to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible, has allowed authorities to stretch out the time between the first shot and the second from 21 days to 12 weeks. Around the world, among scientists and governments, there is strong debate on the wisdom of that plan.

## THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- UK orders a new national lockdown, takes big step on the vaccine front
- Germany set to extend national lockdown as virus deaths mount; leaders face questions about perceived slow vaccine rollout
- AP Explainer: US regulator weighs in on vaccine dosing debate
- Vaccination drive enters new phase in U.S. as some start receiving final dose
- Worries about vaccine rollout rise as New York finds virus variant
- Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>, <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

**ROME** — The Italian government has extended travel restrictions and other measures for another week in its modified Christmas season lockdown to try to head off a new surge in coronavirus infections.

A decree approved by the Cabinet early Tuesday extends the measures to Jan. 15. At the same time, the government agreed to begin letting high school students return to class starting next week, but only in limited numbers. High schools have been on remote learning since the end of October, though elementary and middle schoolers have been attending in-person school since the start of the academic year.

Italy, the first country in the west to be slammed by the virus, has been trying to control its latest wave of infections with localized restrictions. After two months of restrictions, infections have plateaued but hospitals are still under pressure, hundreds of people are still dying every day and officials fear cases could surge again due to holiday get-togethers.

Italy has reported over 75,600 confirmed virus deaths in the pandemic, but experts say many COVID-19 deaths were not counted early in the pandemic.

**PARIS** — Amid public outcry, France's health minister has promised an "exponential" acceleration of his country's slow coronavirus vaccination process.

After barely 500 people in France were vaccinated in the first six days, Health Minister Olivier Veran defended the government's strategy of giving the vaccines first to residents of nursing homes. But he vowed Tuesday to simplify a bureaucratic consent process blamed in part for France's lagging vaccinations.

Veran said the government will expand the number of vaccination centers and categories of people eligible for early vaccines, and allow people to sign up for vaccinations on an app or by phone.

But he insisted that the government would not forego safety guidelines in a country facing broad vaccine skepticism.

While neighboring countries are imposing strict new lockdowns amid surging infections, Veran said France is weighing its options and "cannot relax," but announced no new measures.

**BERLIN** — Germany's disease control center on Tuesday reported 944 more COVID-19 deaths, fueling expectations that Chancellor Angela Merkel and the country's 16 state governors will extend the country's lockdown until the end of the month.

Germany's latest lockdown took effect Dec. 16 after a partial shutdown starting in early November failed to reduce the number of daily new coronavirus infections. It was initially set to expire Jan. 10.

Merkel's meeting with the governors on Tuesday will decide how long the lockdown should go on and to what extent schools will reopen. Another topic high on the agenda will be addressing criticism of the

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 44 of 87

country's vaccination program amid frustrations over its gradual start.

Vaccinations in Germany and the rest of the 27-nation European Union started over a week ago. In Germany, a nation of 83 million, nearly 265,000 vaccinations had been reported by Monday, the Robert Koch Institute said.

**JAKARTA** — Indonesia will start its COVID-19 vaccination program on Jan. 13, with President Joko Widodo getting the first shot.

Minister of Health Budi Gunadi Sadikin said Tuesday that after the president, ministers and other central government officials get vaccinated, the program will be expanded to other regions the next day and will prioritize health workers.

The government is still waiting for an emergency use authorization for the vaccine from China's Sinovac Biotech from its drugs regulator and a fatwa on the halal vaccine from the Indonesian Ulema Council.

According to the Health Ministry, it will take 15 months, from January to March 2022, for Indonesia to complete the COVID-19 vaccination program in 34 provinces and reach a total population of 181.5 million people.

On Tuesday, Indonesia registered 7,445 new COVID-19 and 198 additional deaths, bringing the overall confirmed death toll to 23,109.

**JERUSALEM** — American biotech company Moderna says Israel has approved its COVID-19 vaccine, but the announcement comes as the country faces a rapidly growing outbreak of the disease.

Moderna said in a statement Tuesday that the Israeli Health Ministry authorized use of the company's vaccine and that it would begin delivering this month the 6 million doses secured by Israel.

Israel's Health Ministry reported 8,308 new confirmed cases of coronavirus on Tuesday — one of the highest daily tallies since the beginning of the pandemic — as the country struggles to contain the pandemic during a third national lockdown. Israel has recorded over 450,000 cases of coronavirus and 3,445 deaths.

At the same time, Israel has already vaccinated over 10% of its population, primarily the elderly and healthcare workers.

**BANGKOK** — Thailand's government says it is tightening restrictions aimed at stopping the spread of the coronavirus as the country logged another 527 new cases.

Officials said Tuesday that foreign migrant workers accounted for 439 of the new infections, while 82 were Thais infected locally and another six were new arrivals from abroad. Thailand on Monday reported 745 infections, the most since the pandemic began.

After almost no locally transmitted infections for almost half a year, Thailand in recent weeks has seen a viral resurgence first spotted in communities of foreign factory and market workers just outside Bangkok.

The government has responded by putting in place fresh antivirus measures across large parts of the country, including closing schools and limiting restaurant hours. The government said Tuesday that it will restrict travel between provinces in so-called "red-zone" to goods, cargo and necessary travel. Field hospitals were being set up in at least five hot zones

**BEIJING** — China has designated parts of Hebei province near Beijing as a coronavirus high danger zone after 14 new cases of COVID-19 were found.

Eleven of those cases were in Shijiazhuang city, where some events for the 2022 Winter Olympics will be held. An additional 30 people tested positive for the virus without showing any symptoms.

The other three COVID-19 cases were in the city of Yantai. Parts of Shijiazhuang were designated high danger areas, meaning they will undergo stricter testing and isolation measures, while parts of Yantai were registered as medium risk areas.

China has recorded 87,183 cases of COVID-19, with 4,634 deaths. People who have tested positive but not shown symptoms have been counted separately.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 45 of 87

China is urging tens of millions of migrant workers to stay put during next month's Lunar New Year holiday, usually the world's largest annual human migration. Classes are also being dismissed a week earlier than usual and tourists are being told not to come to Beijing for holidays.

MEXICO CITY — Mexico approved the Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine for emergency use Monday, hoping to spur a halting vaccination effort that has only given about 44,000 shots since the third week of December, about 82% of the doses the country has received.

Prior to this, the Pfizer vaccine was the only one approved for use in Mexico. Mexican regulators approved the AstraZeneca shot on Monday.

Assistant Health Secretariat Hugo López-Gatell said he erroneously reported approval for Chinese vaccine-maker CanSino, noting it had not yet submitted full study results for safety and efficacy.

Mexico has pinned much of its hopes on the inexpensive, one-shot CanSino vaccine. "It will make things a lot easier for us," López-Gatell said.

TOPEKA, Kan. - Gov. Laura Kelly says she's "very comfortable" with how Kansas is distributing COVID-19 vaccines despite U.S. government data showing its inoculation rate is the lowest of any state.

The Democratic governor argued Monday that Kansas likely has a more efficient distribution system than other states and is getting vaccine doses more quickly to more communities. The state Department of Health and Environment has said the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows Kansas behind other states because of a reporting lag. Kelly told reporters the state has concentrated on "getting vaccinations in people's arms."

The CDC reported Monday that Kansas had administered 20,110 vaccine shots, or 690 for every 100,000 residents, making it the only state to inoculate fewer than 700 residents out of every 100,000.

House Speaker Ron Ryckman Jr., a Kansas City-area Republican, said Monday that Kansas residents "are tired of hearing excuses."

JACKSON, MISS. -- Officials in Mississippi announced a plan Monday to streamline access to coronavirus vaccines for vulnerable populations in the coming weeks.

"We want to make sure that as many doses as we get this week, we're getting that many shots in arms," Gov. Tate Reeves said during a news conference. "It doesn't do us any good if it's sitting on the shelf."

The Republican governor said Monday that people over 75 will have access to the vaccine, beginning next week, at private clinics and drive-through sites. The week after, those over 65 will become eligible for the vaccine.

He said "we must focus on saving lives."

The Department of Health has 18 high-volume drive-through sites prepared for the vaccine rollout. Approximately 174 private clinics have also requested vaccines.

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles County is likely to hit 1,000 coronavirus-related deaths a week soon if the current trends continue.

More than 1 in 5 people are testing positive for COVID-19 and the county's cases doubled between Nov. 30, at 400,000, and Jan. 2, to 800,000. It took more than nine months to reach 400,000.

County health officials fear a surge from Christmas and New Year's gatherings. Additional Thanksgiving cases have swamped hospitals, forcing them to treat patients in hallways, ambulances and the gift shop, and forced an oxygen shortage.

The county on Monday reported 77 additional deaths, which include a reporting lag over the weekend, bringing the total to 10,850 in the nation's most populous county.

Officials also reported 9,142 new cases — a lower figure due to testing sites being closed during the New Year holiday — to make a total of 827,498. The variant has not yet been detected in the county but officials believe it is here.

Nearly 7,700 people are hospitalized countywide for COVID-19 and 21% are in intensive care units.

"We're likely to experience the worst conditions in January that we've faced the entire pandemic -- and that's hard to imagine," county public health director Barbara Ferrer said.

DENVER — Inmates in a Colorado jail will get daily temperature checks and those who test positive for COVID-19 will be regularly monitored by medical staff under a temporary deal negotiated by lawyers for the American Civil Liberties Union and the sheriff and approved by a federal judge.

The ACLU sued El Paso County Sheriff Bill Elder last month after his office acknowledged that inmates were not routinely given masks to prevent the spread of infection until a large COVID-19 outbreak in the jail. Jail officials said they could not distribute masks initially during the pandemic because the only ones available had metal staples.

Under the preliminary injunction, inmates will be given two cloth masks to use and deputies who do not wear masks will face discipline. Deputies will check inmates' temperatures twice a day and anyone with a temperature over 99.4 degrees will be referred to medical staff.

Those who test positive will be checked by medical staff daily and given access to over-the-counter pain and cold medicine like Tylenol or Mucinex for free.

## Zimbabwean teen teaches taekwondo to fight child marriage

By FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — In Zimbabwe, where girls as young as 10 are forced to marry due to poverty or traditional and religious practices, a teenage taekwondo enthusiast is using the sport to give girls in an impoverished community a fighting chance at life.

"Not many people do taekwondo here, so it's fascinating for the girls, both married and single. I use it to get their attention," said 17-year old Natsiraishe Maritsa, a martial arts fan since the age of 5 who is now using taekwondo to rally young girls and mothers to join hands and fight child marriage.

Children as young as four and some of Natsiraishe's former schoolmates who are now married, line up on the tiny, dusty yard outside her parents' home in the poor Epworth settlement, about 15 kilometers (9 miles) southeast of the capital, Harare.

They enthusiastically follow her instructions to stretch, kick, strike, punch and spar. After class, they talk about the dangers of child marriage. Holding their babies, the recently married girls took the lead.

One after the other, they narrated how their marriages have turned into bondage, including verbal and physical abuse, marital rape, pregnancy-related health complications, and being hungry.

"We are not ready for this thing called marriage. We are just too young for it," Maritsa told The Associated Press after the session, which she said is "a safe space" for the girls to share ideas.

"The role of teen mothers is usually ignored when people campaign against child marriages. Here, I use their voices, their challenges, to discourage those young girls not yet married to stay off early sexual activity and marriage," said Maritsa.

Neither boys nor girls may legally marry until the age of 18, according to Zimbabwean law enacted after the Constitutional Court in 2016 struck down earlier legislation that allowed girls to marry at 16.

Nonetheless, the practice remains widespread in the economically struggling southern African nation, where an estimated 30% of girls are married before reaching 18, according to the United Nations Children's Fund. Child marriage is prevalent across Africa, and rising poverty amid the COVID-19 pandemic has increased pressures on families to marry off their young daughters.

For some poor families in Zimbabwe, marrying off a young daughter means one less burden, and the bride price paid by the husband is often "used by families as a means of survival," according to Girls Not Brides, an organization that campaigns to end child marriages.

Some religious sects encourage girls as young as 10 to marry much older men for "spiritual guidance," while some families, to avoid "shame," force girls who engage in pre-marital sex to marry their boyfriends, according to the organization.

Maritsa, through her association called Vulnerable Underaged People's Auditorium, is hoping to increase

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 47 of 87

the confidence of both the married and single girls through the martial arts lessons and the discussions that follow.

Zimbabwe's ban on public gatherings imposed as part of strict lockdown measures last week to try to slow an unprecedented surge in new COVID-19 infections have forced Maritsa to suspend the sessions, but she hopes to resume as soon as the lockdown is lifted.

"From being hopeless, the young mothers feel empowered ... being able to use their stories to dissuade other girls from falling into the same trap," said Maritsa, who said she started the project in 2018 after seeing her friends leave school for marriage.

Some, such as her best friend, 21-year-old Pruzmay Mandaza, are now planning on returning to school, although her husband forced her to step down as vice-chair of the association and stopped her from participating in the taekwondo training.

Inside the neatly decorated small house adorned with Maritsa's medals and pictures, her parents prepare fruit juice and some cookies for the girls — their sacrifice to help their daughter's efforts.

"I can only take 15 people per session because the only support I get is from my parents," said Maritsa. "My father is a small-scale farmer, my mother is a full-time housewife but they sacrifice the little they have toward what I want to achieve," she said. "He is my jogging partner," she added, referring to her father.

Taekwondo is not very popular in soccer-mad Zimbabwe, but there are pockets of professional and backyard training schools.

Despite her limited resources, Maritsa is committed to her mission.

Early marriages could be increasing as COVID-19 keeps children away from school and deepens poverty, warn women's groups.

Even some of those attending Maritsa's home sessions seem to have different priorities.

"We need to know how to keep our husbands happy, that's what's important," Privilege Chimombe, a 17-year-old mother of two who had her first child at 13 and has been abandoned by her husband, said after a recent session.

"These are the perceptions we have to fight," responded Maritsa. "It's tough, but it has to be done."

## Where is Jack Ma, China's e-commerce pioneer?

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — China's best-known entrepreneur, e-commerce billionaire Jack Ma, made his fortune by taking big risks.

The former English teacher founded Alibaba Group in 1999, when China had few internet users. Online payments service Alipay launched five years later, before regulators said such businesses would be allowed. Both long shots grew to dominate their industries.

Ma's latest gambit backfired after he called regulators too conservative in an Oct. 24 speech and urged them to be more innovative. They halted the impending stock market debut of Ant Group, an online finance platform that grew out of Alipay. Alibaba's share price sank, possibly costing Ma his status as China's richest tycoon.

Since then, the normally voluble Ma has stayed out of the public eye, canceled a TV appearance and avoided social media. That has prompted a flurry of speculation about what might happen to Ma, China's biggest global business celebrity and a symbol of its tech boom.

"The Jack Ma Era is ended," wrote a blogger under the name Yueyue Talks Technology. "It's too late to say goodbye."

Spokespeople for Alibaba and Ant didn't respond to questions about why Ma hasn't appeared in public.

Some see Ma's travails as a warning from the ruling Communist Party that even a wildly successful entrepreneur can't publicly defy regulators. But finance experts said President Xi Jinping's government already was uneasy about Alibaba's dominance in retailing. As for Ant, regulators worried it might add to financial risks seen by the ruling party as one of the biggest threats to China's economic growth.

Shaun Rein, a business consultant in Shanghai who said he meets Alibaba managers and people who

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 48 of 87

know Ma, said none of them reports the billionaire is in legal trouble.

"They spanked him. He's learned his lesson, and that's why he's been quiet for the past two months," said Rein, founder of China Market Research Group. "Some of his friends told me they can't believe how stupid he was."

Ma, 56, stepped down as Alibaba's chairman in 2019 but is part of the Alibaba Partnership, a 36-member group with the right to nominate a majority of its board of directors. He is one of the biggest shareholders.

Ma irked regulators with the speech at a business conference in Shanghai attended by some of the regulators he was criticizing. Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan also was in the audience.

Ma complained regulators had an antique "pawnshop mentality" and were hampering innovation, according to Chinese media. He appealed to them to support unconventional approaches to make it easier for entrepreneurs and young people to borrow.

"The race tomorrow will be a race of innovation, not regulatory capabilities," Ma said, according to the Hong Kong newspaper Apple Daily.

That clashed with the ruling party's marathon campaign to reduce surging debt that has prompted fears about a possible financial crisis and led international rating agencies to cut Beijing's credit rating for government borrowing. At the same event in Shanghai, Wang warned new technologies improve efficiency but "amplified financial risks," according to the business magazine Caixin.

On Nov. 3, regulators suspended Ant's market debut. It would have been 2020's biggest, raising some \$37 billion.

Alibaba's CEO later praised regulators in a possible attempt to repair relations. But Ma said nothing. The last posting on his Sina Weibo social media account is dated Oct. 17.

Alibaba Group shares traded in Hong Kong have fallen 19% since October. Ma's fortune, which peaked earlier above \$60 billion, fell by more than \$10 billion.

Alibaba, headquartered in Ma's hometown of Hangzhou, southwest of Shanghai, was founded to connect Chinese exporters with Western retailers. The company has expanded into online consumer retailing, entertainment and other areas.

Its finance arm, Yu'e Bao, launched in 2013, attracted millions of customers in a market dominated by state-owned banks that focus on serving government industries. By 2017, Yu'e Bao was the world's biggest money market fund with 1.2 trillion yuan (\$170 billion) in assets, competing with state banks for deposits.

Ant Group has been ordered to overhaul its business before its market debut can go ahead.

The central bank said Dec. 28 it told Ant to focus on its online payments business. That suggested the company might be required to scale back its ambitions and new initiatives, which would hurt its appeal to investors.

Ma and Alibaba aren't regulators' only tech industry targets.

The ruling party has declared anti-monopoly enforcement, especially in online industries, a priority.

Executives of Alibaba and five other tech giants including Tencent, operator of the WeChat messaging service, and online retailer JD.com were warned by regulators last month not to try to keep new competitors out of their markets, according to the government.

Stock traders in Hong Kong talk about Ma's disappearance from social media but doubt Alibaba or Ant will be affected, said Kenny Wen of securities firm Everbright Sun Hung Kai.

"The key point that will affect how these companies develop is the latest anti-trust regulations," said Wen. "Jack Ma has already stepped down from management, and this does not affect the operation of the company."

The anti-monopoly investigation of Alibaba announced in December targets its policy that prohibits vendors and other business partners from dealing with its competitors.

Foreign investors were rattled, but Chinese businesspeople are "quite happy" with the crackdown, said Rein.

"A lot of people saw Alibaba and Tencent as monopolies and stifling competition," he said.

Ma's high profile is unusual in a society where folk wisdom warns, "a man fears getting famous like a pig fears getting fat." Others such as Tencent founder Ma Huateng, who is no relation to Jack Ma, are known



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 49 of 87

for avoiding reporters and public appearances.

Jack Ma dresses up in a leather jacket, sunglasses and wig to perform rock songs at Alibaba's annual employee festival in a Hangzhou.

Ma, who jokes that his oversize head and angular features make him look like the title character in "E.T. the Extraterrestrial," has acted as an informal business envoy abroad. He met President Donald Trump in January 2017 and promised to create U.S. jobs.

Ma's success has earned him a reputation as being politically well-connected. But this isn't the first time Alibaba has been hurt by its outspokenness.

In 2015, then-deputy chairman Joe Tsai criticized a government report that said Alibaba failed to keep counterfeits off its sales platforms. The government responded by attacking Alibaba in state media and publicizing complaints about fake and shoddy goods.

AP researcher Yu Bing in Beijing and AP Business Writer Zen Soo in Hong Kong contributed.

## Germany set to extend hard lockdown as daily deaths mount

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's disease control center on Tuesday reported 944 more COVID-19 deaths, fueling expectations that Chancellor Angela Merkel and the country's 16 state governors will extend the country's lockdown until the end of the month.

Germany's latest lockdown took effect Dec. 16 after a partial shutdown starting in early November failed to reduce the number of daily new coronavirus infections. It was initially set to expire Jan. 10.

Merkel's meeting with the governors on Tuesday will decide how long the lockdown should go on and to what extent schools will reopen. Another topic high on the agenda will be addressing criticism of the country's vaccination program amid frustrations over its gradual start.

Vaccinations in Germany and the rest of the 27-nation European Union started over a week ago. In Germany, a nation of 83 million, nearly 265,000 vaccinations had been reported by Monday, the Robert Koch Institute said.

Opposition politicians and even some within Germany's governing coalition have criticized the EU's cautious advance ordering of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine — the only one so far cleared for use in EU nations. The EU's medical regulator is also evaluating a vaccine by Moderna.

The country's health minister has repeatedly said that the vaccinations are progressing as expected and that the slow start is because mobile teams are first going to nursing homes to vaccinate the most vulnerable, which takes more time than inviting people to mass vaccination centers.

Still, in a nod to the heavy pressure, Health Minister Jens Spahn said he has asked the country's agency in charge of vaccinations if the second shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine could be delayed in order to be able to vaccinate more people right away with a first shot. Britain has embraced such a plan with its vaccinations, but the move is being hotly debated by scientists and governments around the world.

Germany's new infections remain at more than twice the level of 50 per 100,000 residents over seven days, which the government wants to reach. In part because of lower testing and delayed reporting, it's not yet clear what effect the Christmas holidays will have on Germany's new coronavirus infections, hospitalizations and deaths.

Germany has reported 35,518 virus-related deaths overall.

Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>, <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## Loyal soldier Pence torn between Trump, Constitution

By ZEKE MILLER and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — He has been President Donald Trump's most loyal soldier, dutifully backing the

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 50 of 87

unpredictable leader through one chaotic situation after another.

Now Vice President Mike Pence finds himself in the most precarious position of his tenure as he prepares to preside over Wednesday's congressional tally of Electoral College votes, the last front in Trump's futile attempts to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the November election.

Seated on the House of Representatives' rostrum, Pence will bear witness to the formalization of Trump's — and his own — election defeat, as tellers from the House and Senate record states' electoral votes. At the end of the count, it will be his job to announce who has won the majority of votes for both president and vice president.

But Pence, whose proscribed role is largely pro forma, is under intense pressure from the president and legions of supporters who want the vice president to use the moment to overturn the will of the voters in a handful of critical battleground states.

"I hope Mike Pence comes through for us, I have to tell you," Trump said at a rally Monday night in Georgia for candidates in two Senate runoff elections.

"Of course, if he doesn't come through, I won't like him quite as much," Trump added, drawing laughs. He said Pence was "going to have a lot to say about it. And you know one thing with him, you're going to get straight shots. He's going to call it straight."

Pence has spent hours huddling with the president, staff and the Senate parliamentarian. His office declined to discuss his plans heading into Wednesday's count. But people close to the vice president stressed his respect for institutions and said they expect him to act in accordance with the law and hew to the Constitution.

"I think he will approach this as a constitutionalist, basically, and say, 'What's my role in the Constitution as president of the Senate?'" said David McIntosh, president of the conservative Club for Growth and a Pence friend. "What he'll do is allow anybody who is going to move to object to be heard, but then abide by what the majority of the Senate makes the outcome."

In fulfilling one of the few formal responsibilities of the vice presidency, Pence also risks compromising his own political future. Pence is eyeing his own run for the White House in 2024, and is banking on his years of loyalty to Trump — likely to be the GOP's top kingmaker for years to come — to help him stand out in what is expected to be a crowded field.

That means he must avoid angering Trump along with large portions of the Republican base, who have bought into the president's unsupported claims of widespread election fraud and have been falsely led to believe that Pence has the power to reverse the outcome by rejecting the votes from states like Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania that swung from Trump in 2016 to Biden in 2020.

"Stop the steal!" voters in Georgia chanted to Pence at a rally for the Senate candidates at the Rock Springs Church in Milner, Georgia, on Monday.

"I know we all — we all got our doubts about the last election. And I want to assure you, I share the concerns of millions of Americans about voting irregularities," Pence told the crowd. "And I promise you, come this Wednesday, we'll have our day in Congress. We'll hear the objections. We'll hear the evidence."

On Wednesday beginning at 1 p.m., Pence is to preside over a joint session of Congress. His role is to open the certificates of the electoral votes from each state and present them to the appointed "tellers" from the House and Senate in alphabetical order. At the end of the count, it falls to Pence to announce who won.

Pence on Sunday held a two-hour meeting that included the Senate parliamentarian to review his role and responsibilities. Allies stress his role is largely ministerial, and that the electoral count could only be overturned by the lawmakers — a virtual impossibility given that Democrats control the House.

But on Monday, Pence was in the Oval Office with Trump and senior aides as the president continued to seek pathways to overturn the election results. The scene appeared animated as the president, Pence and their chiefs of staff met with lawyer John Eastman and others.

Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who has been leading the president's legal effort, said in a podcast interview that the team had been consulting with constitutional law professors and analyzing Pence's op-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 51 of 87

tions. He said Trump and Pence on Monday were "going through all of the research" and would probably wait until Tuesday to make a decision on how to proceed.

"The president will make this decision based on his judgment and the advice that he gets on what the Constitution demands," Giuliani told conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

Despite claims by Trump and his allies, there was not widespread fraud in the election. This has been confirmed by a range of election officials and by William Barr, who stepped down as attorney general last month. Neither Trump nor any of the lawmakers promising to object to the count have presented credible evidence that would change the outcome.

Nevertheless, more than 100 House Republicans and a dozen Senate Republicans have said they will challenge the electoral votes of at least one of the battleground states on Wednesday.

And on Monday, Republican parties in several states had Ronna McDaniel, who chairs the Republican National Committee, deliver letters to Pence encouraging him to reject the legally selected electors from Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin, Arizona, Nevada and Pennsylvania.

The efforts make it all but impossible for Pence to remain above the fray, as some allies had hoped. Others have expressed regret that some extreme Trump loyalists, including former national security adviser Michael Flynn and attorney Sidney Powell, have tried to drive a wedge between Trump and his vice president during the final days of the administration.

That frustration seems to be shared by Pence, who recently expressed his frustrations to McIntosh about an ad from the anti-Trump group The Lincoln Project that painted the vice president as distancing himself from Trump. So the Club for Growth cut its own ad, which it aired in Palm Beach during Trump's Florida vacation, trumpeting Pence's loyalty to the president.

McIntosh said Pence resented what he felt was a "cheap shot" by the group, adding that he expects Pence to emerge from this week's drama with his reputation intact.

"In the moment, there is that uncomfortable feeling, but in the long run, people respect you if you do what you think is right and explain why you do it," he said. "This moment will pass. The decision will be made."

## Trump says he'll 'fight like hell' to hold on to presidency

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

DALTON, Ga. (AP) — With mounting desperation, Donald Trump declared he would "fight like hell" to hold on to the presidency and appealed to Republican lawmakers to reverse his election loss to Joe Biden when they convene this week to confirm the Electoral College vote.

Electoral voters won by President-elect Biden are "not gonna take this White House!" he shouted as supporters cheered at an outdoor rally Monday night in Georgia. Trump's announced purpose for the trip was to boost Republican Senate candidates in Tuesday's runoff election, but he spent much of his speech complaining bitterly about his election loss — which he insists he won "by a lot."

Earlier, in Washington, he pressed Republican lawmakers to formally object Wednesday at a joint session of Congress that is to confirm Biden's victory in the Electoral College, itself a confirmation of Biden's nationwide victory Nov. 3.

Though he got nothing but cheers Monday night, Trump's attempt to overturn the presidential election is splitting the Republican Party. Some GOP lawmakers backing him are rushing ahead, despite an outpouring of condemnation from current and former party officials warning the effort is undermining Americans' faith in democracy. All 10 living former defense secretaries wrote in an op-ed that "the time for questioning the results has passed."

It's unclear the extent to which GOP leaders in Congress will be able to control Wednesday's joint session, which could drag into the night, though the challenges to the election are all but certain to fail. Trump himself is whipping up crowds for a Wednesday rally near the White House.

Vice President Mike Pence, who is under pressure to tip the results for Trump, will be closely watched as he presides in a ceremonial role over Wednesday's joint session.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 52 of 87

"I promise you this: On Wednesday, we'll have our day in Congress," Pence said while himself campaigning in Georgia ahead of Tuesday's runoff elections that will determine control of the Senate.

Trump said in Georgia: "I hope that our great vice president comes through for us. He's a great guy. Of course, if he doesn't come through, I won't like him quite as much." He added, "No, Mike is a great guy."

One of the Georgia Republicans in Tuesday's runoff — Sen. Kelly Loeffler, who faces Democrat Raphael Warnock — told the crowd she will join senators formally objecting to Biden's win. The other Republican seeking reelection, David Perdue, who is running against Democrat Jon Ossoff, will not be eligible to vote.

Trump repeated numerous times his claims of election fraud, which have been rejected by election officials — Republican as well as Democratic in state after state — and courts up to the U.S. Supreme Court. His former attorney general, William Barr, also has said there is no evidence of fraud that could change the election outcome.

The congressional effort to keep Trump in office is being led by Sens. Josh Hawley of Missouri and Ted Cruz of Texas, along with rank-and-file House members, some on the party's fringe.

"Just got off the phone with @realDonaldTrump," tweeted newly elected Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, who is aligned with a conspiracy group backing Trump.

"He wants you to call your Rep & Senators TODAY, ALL DAY!" she tweeted Monday. "Don't let Republicans be the Surrender Caucus!" She later joined the president on Air Force One as he traveled to Georgia.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has tried to prevent his party from engaging in this battle, which could help define the GOP in the post-Trump era. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, a Trump ally, has declined to say much publicly on it.

Both Hawley and Cruz are potential 2024 presidential contenders, vying for Trump's base of supporters.

Biden, speaking at a drive-in rally in Atlanta, said Trump "spends more time whining and complaining" than he does working on solving the coronavirus pandemic. He added dismissively, "I don't know why he still wants the job — he doesn't want to do the work."

During the day Monday, more current and former GOP officials rebuked the effort to upend the election.

Former three-term Sen. John Danforth of Missouri said in a stinging statement, "Lending credence to Trump's false claim that the election was stolen is a highly destructive attack." He said, "It is the opposite of conservative; it is radical."

Two current Republican senators, Rob Portman of Ohio and Mike Lee of Utah, joined the growing number who now oppose the legislators' challenge.

Portman said in a statement, "I cannot support allowing Congress to thwart the will of the voters."

At the Dalton rally, Trump noted he was a "little angry" at Lee, but expressed hope that the senator would change his mind. "We need his vote," Trump said.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the giant lobbying organization and virtual embodiment of the business establishment, said the electoral vote challenge "undermines our democracy and the rule of law and will only result in further division across our nation."

So far, Trump has enlisted support from a dozen Republican senators and up to 100 House Republicans to challenge Biden's 306-232 Electoral College win.

With Biden set to be inaugurated Jan. 20, Trump is intensifying efforts to prevent the traditional transfer of power. On a call disclosed Sunday, he can be heard pressuring Georgia officials to "find" him more votes from the Nov. 3 election he lost in that state.

The challenge to the presidential election is on a scale unseen since the aftermath of the Civil War, though the typically routine process of confirming Electoral College votes has been hit with brief objections before. In 2017, several House Democrats challenged Trump's win, but Biden, who presided at the time as the vice president, swiftly dismissed them to assert Trump's victory.

States run their own elections, and Congress has been loath to interfere.

"The 2020 election is over," said a statement Sunday from a bipartisan group of 10 senators, including Republicans Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and Mitt Romney of Utah.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 53 of 87

A range of Republican officials — including Gov. Larry Hogan of Maryland; Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, the third-ranking House GOP leader; and former House Speaker Paul Ryan — have criticized the GOP efforts to overturn the election.

Hawley defended his actions in a lengthy email over the weekend to colleagues, saying his Missouri constituents have been “loud and clear” in insisting Biden’s defeat of Trump was unfair.

Cruz’s coalition of 11 Republican senators vows to reject the Electoral College tallies unless Congress launches a commission to immediately conduct an audit of the election results. Congress is unlikely to agree to that.

The group, which presented no new evidence of election problems, includes Sens. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, James Lankford of Oklahoma, Steve Daines of Montana, John Kennedy of Louisiana, Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee, Mike Braun of Indiana, Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming, Roger Marshall of Kansas, Bill Hagerty of Tennessee and Tommy Tuberville of Alabama.

Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Atlanta, Steve LeBlanc in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Jim Salter in O’Fallon, Missouri, Alan Fram in Washington and Tali Arbel of the Technology Team contributed.

## DC mayor calls in National Guard ahead of pro-Trump protests

By ASHRAF KHALIL and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bracing for possible violence, the nation’s capital has mobilized the National Guard ahead of planned protests by President Donald Trump’s supporters in connection with the congressional vote expected Wednesday to affirm Joe Biden’s election victory.

Trump’s supporters are planning to rally Tuesday and Wednesday, seeking to bolster the president’s unproven claims of widespread voter fraud. “There are people intent on coming to our city armed,” D.C. Acting Police Chief Robert Contee said Monday.

A pro-Trump rally in December ended in violence as hundreds of Trump supporters, wearing the signature black and yellow of the Proud Boys faction, sought out confrontations with a collective of local activists attempting to bar them from Black Lives Matter Plaza, an area near the White House.

On Monday, Metropolitan Police Department officers arrested the leader of the Proud Boys, Henry “Enrique” Tarrío, 36, after he arrived in Washington ahead of this week’s protests. Tarrío was accused of burning a Black Lives Matter banner that was torn down from a historic Black church in downtown Washington during the December protests.

A warrant had been issued for Tarrío’s arrest for destruction of property, police said. He was also facing a weapons charges after officers found him with two high-capacity firearm magazines when he was arrested, a police spokesman said.

Trump has repeatedly encouraged this week’s protests and hinted that he may get personally involved. Over the weekend, he retweeted a promotion for the rally with the message, “I will be there. Historic Day!”

At a November rally, which drew about 15,000 people, Trump staged a limousine drive-by past cheering crowds in Freedom Plaza, on the city’s iconic Pennsylvania Avenue. And at the December rally, which drew smaller numbers but a larger contingent of Proud Boys, Trump’s helicopter flew low over cheering crowds on the National Mall.

The protests coincide with Wednesday’s congressional vote expected to certify the Electoral College results, which Trump continues to dispute,

Election officials from both political parties, governors in key battleground states and Trump’s former attorney general, William Barr, have said there was no widespread fraud in the election. Nearly all the legal challenges from Trump and his allies have been dismissed by judges, including two rejected by the Supreme Court.

Now with downtown D.C. businesses boarding up their windows, Mayor Muriel Bowser has requested a limited National Guard deployment to help bolster the Metropolitan Police Department. During a press conference on Monday, Bowser asked that local area residents stay away from downtown D.C., and avoid

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 54 of 87

confrontations with anyone who is "looking for a fight." But, she warned, "we will not allow people to incite violence, intimidate our residents or cause destruction in our city."

According to a U.S. defense official, Bowser put in a request on New Year's Eve to have Guard members on the streets from Tuesday to Thursday to help with the protests. The official said the additional forces will be used for traffic control and other assistance but they will not be armed or wearing body armor. Congress is meeting this week to certify the Electoral College results, and Trump has refused to concede while whipping up support for protests.

Some 340 D.C. National Guard members will be activated, with about 115 on duty in the streets at any given time, said the defense official, who provided details on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. The official said Guard members will be used to set up traffic control points around the city and to stand with district police officers at all the city's Metro stops. Contee said Guard troops will also be used for some crowd management.

"Some of our intelligence certainly suggests there will be increased crowd sizes," said Contee.

D.C. police have posted signs throughout downtown warning that carrying any sort of firearm is illegal and Contee asked area residents to warn authorities of anyone who might be armed.

Because D.C. does not have a governor, the designated commander of the city's National Guard is Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy. Any D.C. requests for Guard deployments have to be approved by him.

The defense official said that there will be no active duty military troops in the city, and the U.S. military will not be providing any aircraft or intelligence. The D.C. Guard will provide specialized teams that will be prepared to respond to any chemical or biological incident. But the official said there will be no D.C. Guard members on the National Mall or at the U.S. Capitol.

At previous pro-Trump protests, police have sealed off Black Lives Matter Plaza itself, but the confrontations merely spilled out to the surrounding streets. Contee on Monday said sealing the area again was "a very real possibility" but said that decision would depend on the circumstances.

"We know that historically over the last few demonstrations that BLM plaza has been a focal point," Contee said. "We want to make sure that that is not an issue."

The National Park Service has received three separate applications for pro-Trump protests on Tuesday or Wednesday, with estimated maximum attendance at around 15,000 people, said Park Service spokesman Mike Litterst. On Monday, a stage was being assembled for one of the protests on The Ellipse, just south of the White House.

Organizers plan to rally on Tuesday evening at Freedom Plaza and again all day Wednesday on the Ellipse, including a 1 p.m. Wednesday march to the Capitol. Expected attendees include high-level Trump supporters like Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and Republican strategist Roger Stone, a longtime Trump devotee whose three-year prison sentence was commuted by Trump. Stone was convicted of repeatedly lying to Congress during the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

During the Dec. 12 pro-Trump protests, at least two local Black churches had Black Lives Matter banners torn down and set ablaze. Contee said the hate-crimes investigation into those incidents was still ongoing and that his officers would be out in force around area churches to prevent similar incidents.

"We will be increasing our visibility around the churches in the area," he said.

On Monday the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law filed a lawsuit in D.C. Superior Court against the Proud Boys and Tarrion on behalf of one of the vandalized churches, Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church.

"We will not allow white supremacist violence to go unchecked by the laws of the land," Rev. William H Lamar IV, pastor of Metropolitan AME, said in a statement.

---

Associated Press writers Elana Schor, Michael Kunzelman and Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

## **NYSE withdraws plans to delist 3 Chinese phone carriers**

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Stock Exchange says it is withdrawing plans to remove shares of three

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 55 of 87

Chinese state-owned phone carriers under an order by President Donald Trump.

The exchange cited "further consultation" with U.S. regulators but gave no other details of its decision in a notice issued late Monday.

The NYSE earlier announced plans to remove China Telecom Corp. Ltd., China Mobile Ltd. and China Unicom Hong Kong Ltd. after Trump's order in November barring Americans from investing in securities issued by companies deemed to be linked to the Chinese military.

Hong Kong-traded shares in the three companies surged Tuesday. China Telecom rose 5.7%, China Mobile jumped 5.5% and China Unicom surged 6.7%. Shares in all three have fallen recently.

The Chinese government has accused Washington of misusing national security as an excuse to hamper competition and has warned that Trump's order would hurt U.S. and other investors worldwide.

Political analysts expect little change in policy under President-elect Joe Biden due to widespread frustration with China's trade and human rights records and accusations of spying and technology theft.

U.S. officials have complained that China's ruling Communist Party takes advantage of access to American technology and investment to expand its military, already one of the world's biggest and most heavily armed.

## Trump says he'll 'fight like hell' to hold on to presidency

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

DALTON, Ga. (AP) — With mounting desperation, Donald Trump declared Monday night he would "fight like hell" to hold on to the presidency and appealed to Republican lawmakers to reverse his election loss to Joe Biden when they convene this week to confirm the Electoral College vote.

Electoral voters won by President-elect Biden are "not gonna take this White House!" he shouted as supporters cheered at an outdoor rally in Georgia. Trump's announced purpose for the trip was to boost Republican Senate candidates in Tuesday's runoff election, but he spent much of his speech complaining bitterly about his election loss — which he insists he won "by a lot."

Earlier, in Washington, he pressed Republican lawmakers to formally object Wednesday at a joint session of Congress that is to confirm Biden's victory in the Electoral College, itself a confirmation of Biden's nationwide victory Nov. 3.

Though he got nothing but cheers Monday night, Trump's attempt to overturn the presidential election is splitting the Republican Party. Some GOP lawmakers backing him are rushing ahead, despite an outpouring of condemnation from current and former party officials warning the effort is undermining Americans' faith in democracy. All 10 living former defense secretaries wrote in an op-ed that "the time for questioning the results has passed."

It's unclear the extent to which GOP leaders in Congress will be able to control Wednesday's joint session, which could drag into the night, though the challenges to the election are all but certain to fail. Trump himself is whipping up crowds for a Wednesday rally near the White House.

Vice President Mike Pence, who is under pressure to tip the results for Trump, will be closely watched as he presides in a ceremonial role over Wednesday's joint session.

"I promise you this: On Wednesday, we'll have our day in Congress," Pence said while himself campaigning in Georgia ahead of Tuesday's runoff elections that will determine control of the Senate.

Trump said in Georgia: "I hope that our great vice president comes through for us. He's a great guy. Of course, if he doesn't come through, I won't like him quite as much." He added, "No, Mike is a great guy."

One of the Georgia Republicans in Tuesday's runoff — Sen. Kelly Loeffler, who faces Democrat Raphael Warnock — told the crowd she will join senators formally objecting to Biden's win. The other Republican seeking reelection, David Perdue, who is running against Democrat Jon Ossoff, will not be eligible to vote.

Trump repeated numerous times his claims of election fraud, which have been rejected by election officials — Republican as well as Democratic in state after state — and courts up to the U.S. Supreme Court. His former attorney general, William Barr, also has said there is no evidence of fraud that could change the election outcome.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 56 of 87

The congressional effort to keep Trump in office is being led by Sens. Josh Hawley of Missouri and Ted Cruz of Texas, along with rank-and-file House members, some on the party's fringe.

"Just got off the phone with @realDonaldTrump," tweeted newly elected Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, who is aligned with a conspiracy group backing Trump.

"He wants you to call your Rep & Senators TODAY, ALL DAY!" she tweeted Monday. "Don't let Republicans be the Surrender Caucus!" She later joined the president on Air Force One as he traveled to Georgia.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has tried to prevent his party from engaging in this battle, which could help define the GOP in the post-Trump era. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, a Trump ally, has declined to say much publicly on it.

Both Hawley and Cruz are potential 2024 presidential contenders, vying for Trump's base of supporters.

Biden, speaking at a drive-in rally in Atlanta, said Trump "spends more time whining and complaining" than he does working on solving the coronavirus pandemic. He added dismissively, "I don't know why he still wants the job — he doesn't want to do the work."

During the day Monday, more current and former GOP officials rebuked the effort to upend the election.

Former three-term Sen. John Danforth of Missouri said in a stinging statement, "Lending credence to Trump's false claim that the election was stolen is a highly destructive attack." He said, "It is the opposite of conservative; it is radical."

Two current Republican senators, Rob Portman of Ohio and Mike Lee of Utah, joined the growing number who now oppose the legislators' challenge.

Portman said in a statement, "I cannot support allowing Congress to thwart the will of the voters."

At the Dalton rally, Trump noted he was a "little angry" at Lee, but expressed hope that the senator would change his mind. "We need his vote," Trump said.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the giant lobbying organization and virtual embodiment of the business establishment, said the electoral vote challenge "undermines our democracy and the rule of law and will only result in further division across our nation."

So far, Trump has enlisted support from a dozen Republican senators and up to 100 House Republicans to challenge Biden's 306-232 Electoral College win.

With Biden set to be inaugurated Jan. 20, Trump is intensifying efforts to prevent the traditional transfer of power. On a call disclosed Sunday, he can be heard pressuring Georgia officials to "find" him more votes from the Nov. 3 election he lost in that state.

The challenge to the presidential election is on a scale unseen since the aftermath of the Civil War, though the typically routine process of confirming Electoral College votes has been hit with brief objections before. In 2017, several House Democrats challenged Trump's win, but Biden, who presided at the time as the vice president, swiftly dismissed them to assert Trump's victory.

States run their own elections, and Congress has been loath to interfere.

"The 2020 election is over," said a statement Sunday from a bipartisan group of 10 senators, including Republicans Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and Mitt Romney of Utah.

A range of Republican officials — including Gov. Larry Hogan of Maryland; Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, the third-ranking House GOP leader; and former House Speaker Paul Ryan — have criticized the GOP efforts to overturn the election.

Hawley defended his actions in a lengthy email over the weekend to colleagues, saying his Missouri constituents have been "loud and clear" in insisting Biden's defeat of Trump was unfair.

Cruz's coalition of 11 Republican senators vows to reject the Electoral College tallies unless Congress launches a commission to immediately conduct an audit of the election results. Congress is unlikely to agree to that.

The group, which presented no new evidence of election problems, includes Sens. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, James Lankford of Oklahoma, Steve Daines of Montana, John Kennedy of Louisiana, Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee, Mike Braun of Indiana, Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming, Roger Marshall of Kansas,



Bill Hagerty of Tennessee and Tommy Tuberville of Alabama.

Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Atlanta, Steve LeBlanc in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Jim Salter in O'Fallon, Missouri, Alan Fram in Washington and Tali Arbel of the Technology Team contributed.

## **Biden, Trump warn of high stakes of Georgia Senate runoffs**

By BILL BARROW, WILL WEISSERT and JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA, Ga. (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden on Monday told Georgia Democrats they had the power to “chart the course” for a generation as President Donald Trump urged Republican voters to “swamp” the polls ahead of runoff elections that will determine control of the U.S. Senate.

Trump made his final-hours pitch to voters at a nighttime rally in north Georgia, where Republicans were banking on strong voter turnout Tuesday to reelect Sen. Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue and hold control of the chamber.

Biden campaigned with Democrats Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock in Atlanta, hoping he could recreate the coalition that secured him a narrow victory in the presidential race in November.

“Folks, this is it. This is it. It’s a new year, and tomorrow can be a new day for Atlanta, for Georgia and for America,” Biden said at a drive-in rally. “Unlike any time in my career, one state — one state — can chart the course, not just for the four years but for the next generation.”

The stakes have drawn hundreds of millions of dollars in campaign spending to a once solidly Republican state that now finds itself as the nation’s premier battleground. Biden won Georgia’s 16 electoral votes by about 12,000 votes out of 5 million cast in November, though Trump continues pushing false assertions of widespread fraud that even his now-former attorney general and Georgia’s Republican secretary of state — along with a litany of state and federal judges — have said did not happen.

The president’s trip came a day after disclosure of a remarkable telephone call he made to the Georgia secretary of state over the weekend. Trump pressured Republican Brad Raffensperger to “find” enough votes to overturn Georgia’s election results ahead of Wednesday’s joint session of Congress that will certify Biden’s Electoral College victory. The call highlighted how Trump has used the Georgia campaign to make clear his continued hold on Republican politics.

Angry after the Raffensperger call, Trump floated the idea of pulling out of the rally but was persuaded to go ahead with it so he would have a chance to reiterate his claims of election fraud. Republicans were wary as to whether Trump would focus only on himself and fail to promote the two GOP candidates.

A top Georgia election official said hours before Trump’s rally that he “wanted to scream” after hearing audio of the president’s call with Raffensperger.

“Do not self-suppress your own vote,” said Gabriel Sterling, Georgia’s voting system implementation manager.

But Trump, at the rally in Dalton, Georgia, spent much of his address on message, making an impassioned case that Loeffler’s and Perdue’s races were among the most important Georgia voters would ever face and made the case that “the fate of our country is at stake.”

To be sure, he also spent a fair amount of time rehashing false claims that the November election was “rigged.” He fumed that Republican Gov. Brian Kemp was “incompetent” and replayed many of the same debunked claims that he raised days ago in his call with Raffensperger.

“The Democrats are trying to steal the White House, you cannot let them,” Trump said. “You just can’t let them steal the U.S. Senate, you can’t let it happen.”

Biden on Monday took aim at Trump’s scheme by declaring that “politicians cannot assert, take or seize power” by undermining legitimate elections.

Biden said he needs a Senate majority to pass legislation to combat the coronavirus, and he blasted Perdue and Loeffler as obstructionist Trump loyalists. Loeffler says she will join other Republican lawmakers in objecting to the Electoral College certification of Biden’s victory by Congress on Wednesday.

“You have two senators who think they’ve sworn an oath to Donald Trump, not the United States Con-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 58 of 87

stitution," Biden said.

Earlier Monday, Vice President Mike Pence told a crowd of conservative Christian voters at a campaign event in Milner, Georgia, to stop a Democratic takeover in Washington. "We're going to keep Georgia, and we're going to save America," Pence said at Rock Springs Church in Milner.

Perdue addressed the church crowd in Milner by telephone while quarantining over coronavirus exposure, claiming that "the very future of our republic is on the line" and declaring the duty to vote "a calling from God."

Trump amplified the sentiment, warning that Ossoff and Warnock wins would lead to a sharp leftward swing in American policy making.

"These Senate seats are truly the last line of defense," Trump said. He added, "It's really fight for our country, not a fight for Trump."

Republicans need just one victory to maintain Senate control and force Biden to contend with divided government. Democrats need a sweep for a 50-50 split, giving the tiebreaking vote to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, who will succeed Pence as the Senate's presiding officer. That would give Democrats a Senate majority to go along with their control of the House and executive branch.

Pence, who will preside over Wednesday's congressional joint session, sidestepped Trump's denials Monday until a man yelled out that he must "do the right thing on Jan. 6." Pence promised that "we'll have our day in Congress," though he offered no details about what that might mean. Scores of Republicans in Congress have pledged to protest the Electoral College count, but Pence has no legal authority to override Biden's win.

Facing those passions from the Republican base, Perdue, whose first Senate term expired Sunday, and Loeffler, an appointed senator trying to win her first election, have run as unabashed Trump Republicans and spent the two-month runoff blitz warning of a "radical" and "dangerous" lurch to the left.

Ossoff and Warnock have countered with warnings that a Republican Senate will stymie Biden's administration, especially on pandemic relief.

Warnock pushed back at the deluge of Loeffler television ads casting him as a socialist. "Have you noticed she hasn't even bothered to make a case, Georgia, for why you should keep her in that seat?" Warnock said, speaking ahead of Biden. "That's because she has no case to make."

A closely divided Senate — with the rules still requiring 60 votes to advance major bills — lessens the prospects of sweeping legislation regardless. But a Democratic Senate would at least assure Biden an easier path for top appointees, including judges, and legitimate consideration of his legislative agenda. A Senate led by McConnell would almost certainly deny even an up-or-down vote on Biden's most ambitious plans.

More than 3 million Georgians already have voted. Monday's push focused on getting voters to the polls Tuesday. Democrats ran up a wide margin among 3.6 million early votes in the fall, but Republicans countered with an Election Day surge, especially in small towns and rural areas.

---

Amy reported from Milner, Ga. Associated Press writers Kevin Freking in Dalton, Georgia, Amer Madhani in Chicago and Lisa Mascaro in Washington contributed to this report.

## **Analysis: With call, Trump shows no limit to his power grab**

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — President Donald Trump's ongoing efforts to overturn the 2020 election results — laid out in stark detail in an hourlong weekend phone call with a Georgia election official — are demonstrating his unrestrained determination to maintain a grip on power no matter the consequences for the nation's democratic traditions.

Trump, in a Saturday phone call, pressed Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" enough votes to overturn Joe Biden's win in the state's presidential election. The president repeatedly cited disproven claims of fraud and raised the prospect of a "criminal offense" if officials did not change the vote count, according to a recording of the conversation.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 59 of 87

Trump has ventured into uncharted and dangerous territory since his Nov. 3 defeat, becoming the first president who lost an election to try to hang onto his office by rejecting the will of the voters and casting aside results of the Electoral College enshrined in the Constitution.

Trump's refusal to concede, undermining the democratic tradition of a peaceful transfer of power and hindering the transition to a Biden administration, is particularly risky for the nation when it is grappling with a surging pandemic that has killed more than 350,000 Americans. Paying little heed to the virus in recent weeks, the president has largely abdicated day-to-day governing to instead focus on his efforts to cling to power.

On the phone call, Trump peddled anew conspiracy theories, disinformation and outright lies, insisting that he won Georgia despite multiple recounts that show the contrary. He repeatedly argued that Raffensperger, a fellow Republican, could change the certified results.

"All I want to do is this. I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have," Trump said. "Because we won the state."

Biden won Georgia by 11,779 votes.

The call showcased Trump's evolution since Nov. 3. At first, he privately accepted that he had been beaten even as he publicly protested, hoping to show his loyal supporters that he was still fighting while eyeing his own future, politically and financially.

But as the weeks have gone on, Trump has embraced the narrative that his victory was stolen. His shrinking inner circle is now largely populated by those peddling conspiracy theories. The president lives in a media echo chamber made up of conservative television and social media voices amplifying his claims of fraud.

Asked if he felt like the president was pressuring him to do something illegal, Raffensperger told The Associated Press on Monday: "I think he was looking for any kind of advantage he could get, and I just don't see how he's going to get it."

Raffensperger added that Georgia's presidential votes were counted three times — first right after the election, then in an audit that hand tallied the results and finally in a machine recount at Trump's request.

"If they support a challenge of the electors for Georgia, they're wrong, dead wrong," Raffensperger said. Members of Congress will have to make a decision about the results in the other states, he added, "but in Georgia, we did get it right. I'm not happy with the result, as a Republican, but it is the right result based on the numbers that we saw cast."

Trump's renewed intervention and his persistent and unfounded claims of fraud come nearly two weeks before he leaves office and in the leadup to twin runoff elections in Georgia on Tuesday that will determine political control of the U.S. Senate.

It also added intrigue ahead of Trump's rally in Georgia on Monday night — likely the last of his term — in which he stumped for the two Republican candidates. In a rage after the Raffensperger call, Trump floated the idea of pulling out of the rally, which could be devastating to GOP chances in what are expected to be a pair of razor-thin races.

But Trump was persuaded to go ahead with the rally as a stage from which to reiterate his claims of election fraud and to present, as he tweeted Monday, the "real numbers" from the race. Republicans worried that Trump might focus on himself and depress turnout by undermining faith in the runoff elections and not promoting the two GOP candidates.

In the end, Trump split his time rehashing many of the same debunked grievances he made days earlier in the Raffensperger call, while also urging his supporters to swamp the polls on behalf of Loeffler and Perdue in races he said would determine the "fate of our country."

Trump also signaled he had no intention of dropping his election challenges even after Wednesday's counting of the electoral votes, urging the crowd to watch for new revelations over the next "couple weeks" and vowing: "They're not taking this White House. We're going to fight like hell, I'll tell you right now."

Raffensperger reiterated his frustration with disinformation that has proliferated since the election, much of it emanating from the Oval Office. He expressed fears that Trump's baseless claims would not

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 60 of 87

only undermine the democratic process but could hurt Republicans' chances. People wonder about the best way to vote after false information has caused them to distrust both absentee ballots and the state's voting machines, he said.

"That is not a good message for you to ever get out to your base," he said.

Egged on by Trump, a dozen Republican senators have announced that they would support up to 100 House colleagues in challenging the Electoral College certification process on Wednesday. Wary of Trump's Twitter account and hold over their party's base, many other Republicans were slow to speak out, allowing the president to sow doubt for weeks and undermine Biden's legitimacy with much of the population.

Among those who spoke out Monday, Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, a member of the GOP House leadership team, deemed the president's call "deeply troubling." GOP Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania said the call was "a new low in this whole futile and sorry episode." He commended election officials "who have discharged their duties with integrity over the past two months while weathering relentless pressure, disinformation, and attacks from the president and his campaign."

Audio snippets of the conversation were first posted online by The Washington Post. The AP obtained the full audio of Trump's conversation with Georgia officials from a person on the call. The AP has a policy of not amplifying disinformation and unproven allegations. It annotated a transcript of the call with fact check material.

Various election officials across the country and Trump's former attorney general, William Barr, have said there was no widespread fraud in the election. Republican governors in Arizona and Georgia, battlegrounds crucial to Biden's victory, have also vouched for the integrity of their state elections.

Nearly all the legal challenges from Trump and his allies have been dismissed by judges, including two tossed by the Supreme Court, which has three Trump-nominated justices.

---

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jonathan Lemire has covered the White House and politics for The Associated Press since 2013. Kate Brumback has reported from Atlanta for the AP since 2008.

---

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Jeff Amy in Atlanta, Kevin Freking in Dalton, Georgia, and Lisa Mascaro in Washington contributed to this report.

## Asian stocks track Wall St retreat as COVID caseloads surge

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were mostly lower Tuesday, echoing pullbacks on Wall Street as worries grow about surging coronavirus cases in the region.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 edged 0.1% lower in morning trading to 27,232.38, as the government was preparing to declare a state of emergency in Tokyo and several surrounding areas.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 slipped 0.2% to 6,669.90. South Korea's Kospi was little changed, gaining less than 0.1%, at 2,944.98. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell nearly 0.1% to 27,448.20, while the Shanghai Composite dipped 0.1% to 3,498.65.

Japan's prime minister has said the government is considering declaring a state of emergency to help curb the spread of infections. The move is expected this week. Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike and the governors of Saitama, Chiba and Kanagawa asked the national government over the weekend to declare the emergency after the capital saw a daily record of 1,337 cases on New Year's Eve.

U.S. stocks pulled back from their recent record highs, as big swings return to Wall Street at the onset of a year where the dominant expectation is for a powerful economic rebound to sweep the world.

"With the seven-day average new cases still hanging in the 600 K zone globally, few are likely expecting the market to be spared the resurgence of COVID-19 fears," said Jingyi Pan, senior market strategist at IG in Singapore.

"Certainly, with the amalgamation of factors ranging from the U.K.'s third nationwide lockdown announcement, U.S. hospitalizations surging to a record and Tokyo mulling a state of emergency, these had all been

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 61 of 87

evidence of the still raging pandemic inducing the risk-off mood to start the year for U.S. indices," Pan said.

The S&P 500, which ended 2020 at an all-time high, slid 1.5% after earlier dropping as much as 2.5%. It was the benchmark index's biggest decline since late October. Technology companies accounted for a big share of the sell-off, along with industrial, communication services, health care and other stocks. Only the S&P 500's energy sector managed to eke out a gain.

The selling comes as coronavirus cases keep climbing at frightening rates around the world, threatening to bring more lockdown orders that would punish the economy. The worsening numbers also raise the possibility that Wall Street has been overly optimistic about the big economic recovery it sees coming because of COVID-19 vaccines. Tuesday's upcoming runoff elections to determine which party controls the Senate may also be contributing to the volatility.

"We've got a wobbly start to the year here," said Lindsey Bell, chief investment strategist at Ally Invest. "Investors are looking for a reason to lock in profits. The selling is probably a bit overdone."

The S&P 500 fell 55.42 points to 3,700.65. The Dow Jones Industrial Average also fell from its record set last week, shedding 1.3%, to 30,223.89. At one point, it was down 724 points. The tech-heavy Nasdaq composite lost 1.5%, to 12,698.45.

Small company stocks, which have been notching solid gains in recent weeks, also fell. The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies dropped 1.5%, to 1,945.91.

Investors have been hoping that vaccines will allow daily life around the world to slowly return to normal. That's helped spark a recent recovery for stocks of travel-related businesses, smaller companies and other industries left behind for much of the pandemic.

In the United States, regulators have already approved two other vaccines. China last week gave the greenlight for its first domestically developed vaccine. Others are also being tested.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude added 14 cents to \$47.76 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It shed 92 cents to \$47.62 on Monday.

Brent crude, the international standard, rose 11 cents to \$51.20 a barrel.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar rose to 103.13 Japanese yen from 103.13 yen late Monday. The euro cost \$1.2268, up from \$1.2249.

AP Business Writers Stan Choe and Alex Veiga contributed.

## Vaccination drive enters new phase in US and Britain

By EUGENE GARCIA and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

The first Americans inoculated against COVID-19 began rolling up their sleeves for their second and final dose Monday, while Britain introduced another vaccine on the same day it imposed a new nationwide lockdown against the rapidly surging virus.

New York State, meanwhile, announced its first known case of the new and seemingly more contagious variant, detected in a man in his 60s in Saratoga Springs. Colorado, California and Florida previously reported infections involving the mutant version that has been circulating in England.

The emergence of the variant has added even more urgency to the worldwide race to vaccinate people against the scourge.

In Southern California, intensive care nurse Helen Cordova got her second dose of the Pfizer vaccine at Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center along with other doctors and nurses, who bared their arms the prescribed three weeks after they received their first shot. The second round of shots began in various locations around the country as the U.S. death toll surpassed 352,000.

"I'm really excited because that means I'm just that much closer to having the immunity and being a little safer when I come to work and, you know, just being around my family," Cordova said.

Over the weekend, U.S. government officials reported that vaccinations had accelerated significantly. As of Monday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said nearly 4.6 million shots had been dispensed in the U.S., after a slow and uneven start to the campaign, marked by confusion, logistical hurdles and a patchwork of approaches by state and local authorities.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 62 of 87

Britain, meanwhile, became the first nation to start using the COVID-19 vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University, ramping up its nationwide inoculation campaign amid soaring infection rates blamed on the new variant. Britain's vaccination program began Dec. 8 with the shot developed by Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech.

Brian Pinker, an 82-year-old dialysis patient, received the first Oxford-AstraZeneca shot at Oxford University Hospital, saying in a statement: "I can now really look forward to celebrating my 48th wedding anniversary."

The rollout came the same day Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a new lockdown for England until at least mid-February. Britain has recorded more than 50,000 new coronavirus infections a day over the past six days, and deaths have climbed past 75,000, one of the worst tolls in Europe.

Schools and colleges will generally be closed for face-to-face instruction. Nonessential stores and services like hairdressers will be shut down, and restaurants can offer only takeout.

"As I speak to you tonight, our hospitals are under more pressure from COVID than at any time since the start of the pandemic," Johnson said.

Elsewhere around the world, France and other parts of Europe have come under fire over slow vaccine rollouts and delays.

France's cautious approach appears to have backfired, leaving just a few hundred people vaccinated after the first week and rekindling anger over the government's handling of the pandemic. The slow rollout has been blamed on mismanagement, staffing shortages over the holidays and a complex consent policy designed to accommodate vaccine skepticism among the French.

"It's a state scandal," Jean Rottner, president of the Grand-Est region of eastern France, said on France-2 television. "Getting vaccinated is becoming more complicated than buying a car."

Health Minister Olivier Veran promised that by the end of Monday, several thousand people would be vaccinated, with the tempo picking up through the week. But that would still leave France well behind its neighbors.

French media broadcast charts comparing vaccine figures in various countries: In France, a nation of 67 million people, just 516 people were vaccinated in the first six days, according to the French Health Ministry. Germany's first-week total surpassed 200,000, and Italy's was over 100,000. Millions have been vaccinated in the U.S. and China.

The European Union likewise faced growing criticism about the slow rollout of COVID-19 shots across the 27-nation bloc of 450 million inhabitants. EU Commission spokesman Eric Mamer said the main problem "is an issue of production capacity, an issue that everybody is facing."

The EU has sealed six vaccine contracts with a variety of manufacturers. But only the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been approved for use so far across the EU. The EU's drug regulators are expected to decide on Wednesday whether to recommend authorizing the Moderna vaccine.

In the U.S., Dr. Mysheika Roberts, health commissioner in Columbus, Ohio, said demand has been lower than expected among the people given top priority for the vaccine. For example, the city's 2,000 emergency medical workers are all eligible, but the health department has vaccinated only 850 of them.

She said some people were hesitant to get the vaccine and wanted to see how others handled it. The vaccine also arrived the week of Christmas, and a lot of people were on vacation and didn't want to be bothered during the holiday, she said.

"I think we all assumed that people would want this vaccine so badly, that when it became available, people would just come get it," Roberts said.

Roberts noted there has been no effective mass marketing campaign explaining why people should get vaccinated.

"From the president on down, so many people have been touting the fact that we're going to have a vaccine and get this vaccine out. But so many of those same people who were talking about it now have gone silent," she said. "That could help if those same people would be more vocal about it."

Elsewhere around the globe, Israel appears to be among the world leaders in the vaccination campaign,

inoculating over 1 million people, or roughly 12% of its population, in just over two weeks. The effort has been boosted by a high-quality, centralized health system and the country's small size and concentrated population.

Hoping to spur a halting vaccination effort that has only given about 44,000 shots since the third week of December, Mexico approved the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine for emergency use Monday. Previously, the Pfizer vaccine was the only one approved for use in Mexico.

On Sunday, India, the world's second-most populous country, authorized its first two COVID-19 vaccines — the Oxford-AstraZeneca one and another developed by an Indian company. The move paves the way for a huge inoculation program in the desperately poor nation of 1.4 billion people.

India has confirmed more than 10.3 million cases of the virus, second in the world behind the U.S. It also has reported about 150,000 deaths.

Associated Press writers around the world contributed to this report.

## **EXPLAINER: US regulator weighs in on vaccine dosing debate**

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

The first Americans vaccinated against COVID-19 are getting their second dose, while Britain has decided to postpone boosters and focus instead on giving more people a first shot — international differences that are adding to public confusion.

There's growing debate about whether to change vaccine dosing methods — the time between shots or even the amount in each shot — to stretch scarce supplies and possibly get more people inoculated faster. But the U.S. made clear late Monday that none of those strategies are on the table — because there's no science backing them.

"Making such changes that are not supported by adequate scientific evidence may ultimately be counter-productive to public health," concluded a strongly worded statement from the Food and Drug Administration.

And despite all the attention to stretching supplies, the U.S. and other countries are facing logjams in using the doses that already have been raced out. Here are some questions and answers about vaccine dosing:

### WHAT VACCINES ARE AVAILABLE?

That differs by country. The U.S. is allowing emergency use of two very similar vaccines, one made by Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech and the other made by Moderna. Britain is using the Pfizer shot and a different type of vaccine made by AstraZeneca that also has been cleared in India. The European Union is rolling out the Pfizer shot.

Each requires two doses for full protection, either three weeks or four weeks apart depending on the vaccine.

### COULD I WAIT LONGER BETWEEN DOSES?

Last week, British health officials decided it was OK to delay the second dose as long as 12 weeks. It was a huge surprise since none of the coronavirus vaccine studies were designed to test such a gap between doses.

British officials said postponing booster doses meant they could give more people at least some protection with a first shot. They said unpublished data from the AstraZeneca study suggested waiting a little longer between doses might be better in the long run but provided no details.

But the big question is how long partial protection from just one dose can last.

"There is no data to demonstrate that protection after the first dose is sustained after 21 days," Pfizer said.

Monday, the FDA agreed, saying far too few people in both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine studies missed an on-time booster shot to have enough data to show the strategy might work.

### COULD SUPPLY BE STRETCHED BY USING SMALLER DOSES?

That speculation arose when Dr. Moncef Slaoui, who advises the U.S. vaccine program Operation Warp Speed, told CBS' "Face the Nation" Sunday that there's some data showing two half-doses of the Moderna

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 64 of 87

vaccine might work.

Slaoui said it shows a lower dose sparked a good immune reaction in people ages 18 to 55, and that officials are discussing the approach with Moderna and the FDA.

Presumably Slaoui was referring to early-stage studies in very small numbers of people that explored which dose to put to a real test. But the FDA allowed emergency use of Moderna's vaccine based on a 30,000-person study that found two full doses 28 days apart are about 95% protective against COVID-19 — data that's far more solid than just checking immune reactions.

Again, the FDA late Monday dismissed that dose-stretching idea. The agency said that just like the postponed boosters theory, trying such strategies without data to back them could backfire, "undermining the historic vaccination efforts to protect the population from COVID-19."

## WOULD THESE IDEAS SPEED VACCINATIONS?

It's far from clear that stretching doses will get them into people's arms any faster at this point. In the U.S., initial supplies haven't been used nearly as fast as experts had hoped. Officials expect that to pick up with the holidays over and health workers getting more experience handling the shots.

As of Monday, more than 4.5 million people have been vaccinated out of more than 15 million doses the U.S. government has shipped to the states. That's not a real-time count but an estimate based on reporting of inoculations that can take days to trickle in. States are deciding who gets the shots, and that varies, although many are giving priority to health care workers and nursing home residents.

If officials did stretch doses "but there's still not uptake, then it's not going to make a difference," U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams said Monday on "CBS This Morning."

## CAN MY SECOND DOSE BE A DIFFERENT VACCINE THAN MY FIRST?

Don't mix and match, says the FDA. There's no data showing if vaccines can be interchanged.

In fact, that's why the U.S. government is holding millions of vaccine doses in reserve, until it's clear that getting more supplies in time for everyone's booster isn't a problem.

Recipients get a card with information about which vaccine they received and when to return for the second dose.

---

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Attorney: Congressional seat data not ready until February

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

A Trump administration attorney said Monday that the numbers used for deciding how many congressional seats each state gets won't be ready until February, putting in jeopardy an effort by President Donald Trump to exclude people in the country illegally from those figures.

The U.S. Census Bureau has found new irregularities in the head count data that determines congressional seat allocations and the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in federal spending each year, John Coghlan, a deputy assistant Attorney General, said during a court hearing.

Not having the apportionment numbers finished before President-elect Joe Biden is sworn in on Jan. 20 will jeopardize an effort by Trump to exclude people in the country illegally from the apportionment count since the numbers will be delivered under the administration of Biden, who opposes the effort.

The numbers could be pushed back even later in February from the expected Feb. 9 date, Coghlan said. "It's a continuously moving target," he said.

Under federal law, the Census Bureau is required to turn in the numbers used for allocating congressional seats by Dec. 31, but the bureau announced last week that the numbers wouldn't be ready. At the time, the Census Bureau said it would finish the apportionment numbers in early 2021, as close to the end-of-year deadline as possible.

The new February date was made public during a hearing for a federal lawsuit in San Jose, California.

The California lawsuit was originally brought by a coalition of municipalities and advocacy groups that



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 65 of 87

had sued the Trump administration in order to stop the census from ending early out of concerns that a shortened head count would cause minority communities to be undercounted. The coalition of municipalities and advocacy groups currently is seeking data and documents to help assess the accuracy of the 2020 census.

Attorneys for the coalition had argued that the head count, as well as the data processing schedule, was shortened in order to make sure that Trump was still in office so that his apportionment order to exclude people in the country illegally was enforced. An influential GOP adviser had advocated excluding them from the apportionment process in order to favor Republicans and non-Hispanic whites.

Trump's unprecedented order on apportionment was challenged in more than a half-dozen lawsuits around the U.S., but the Supreme Court ruled last month that any challenge was premature.

Outside statisticians were worried about the timetable the Census Bureau was given for crunching the numbers after the head count ended in October — about half the time originally planned. During the data processing phase, duplicate responses are eliminated, information gaps are filled in by using records and checks are made on the quality of the data.

The new irregularities discovered by the Census Bureau should come as no surprise, said Rob Santos, president of the American Statistical Association, in an email Monday night.

Even with the extra time to process the data, Santos said he worried that racial and ethnic minorities will still be undercounted.

"I appreciate the need for target dates but hope and expect that the Census Bureau would double down on its commitment to focus primarily on the quality of the apportionment counts, however long that takes," Santos said.

Meanwhile, attorneys for the coalition said they plan to seek court sanctions against Trump administration attorneys for refusing to turn over data and documents they are seeking.

Attorneys for the coalition said Monday in a court filing that the Department of Justice has produced data reports for only half of the requests they have made. When Trump administration attorneys did provide information, it was buried in thousands of pages of irrelevant material such as emails for pizza and handbag advertisements and LinkedIn notifications, according to the court filing.

The attorneys for the coalition described the Trump administration's playbook as "deny information and the existence of documents; produce dribs and drabs only when ordered or uncovered; attempt to hide as many documents as possible under exaggerated and improper claims of privilege; and do everything to try and run out the clock."

In the same court filing, the Trump administration attorneys said they haven't violated any orders to produce documents, adding that any blame should be on the coalition's attorneys for making their requests too broad.

In some cases, the government attorneys said they are still working to provide the requested information. In other cases, the requests would require the Census Bureau to write new code in order to make data inquiries that would be "unduly burdensome as the employees needed to search for this data are the same employees who are trying to finish the census," the government attorneys said.

---

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

## **Study: Warming already baked in will blow past climate goals**

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

The amount of baked-in global warming, from carbon pollution already in the air, is enough to blow past international agreed upon goals to limit climate change, a new study finds.

But it's not game over because, while that amount of warming may be inevitable, it can be delayed for centuries if the world quickly stops emitting extra greenhouse gases from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, the study's authors say.

For decades, scientists have talked about so-called "committed warming" or the increase in future tem-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 66 of 87

perature based on past carbon dioxide emissions that stay in the atmosphere for well over a century. It's like the distance a speeding car travels after the brakes are applied.

But Monday's study in the journal *Nature Climate Change* calculates that a bit differently and now figures the carbon pollution already put in the air will push global temperatures to about 2.3 degrees Celsius (4.1 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming since pre-industrial times.

Previous estimates, including those accepted by international science panels, were about a degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) less than that amount of committed warming.

International climate agreements set goals of limiting warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times, with the more ambitious goal of limiting it to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) added in Paris in 2015. The world has already warmed about 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit).

"You've got some ... global warming inertia that's going to cause the climate system to keep warming, and that's essentially what we're calculating," said study co-author Andrew Dessler, a climate scientist at Texas A&M University. "Think about the climate system like the Titanic. It's hard to turn the ship when you see the icebergs."

Dessler and colleagues at the Lawrence Livermore National Lab and Nanjing University in China calculated committed warming to take into account that the world has warmed at different rates in different places and that places that haven't warmed as fast are destined to catch up.

Places such as the Southern Ocean, surrounding Antarctica are a bit cooler, and that difference creates low-lying clouds that reflect more sun away from earth, keeping these places cooler. But this situation can't keep going indefinitely because physics dictates that cooler locations will warm up more and when they do, the clouds will dwindle and more heating will occur, Dessler said.

Previous studies were based on the cooler spots staying that way, but Dessler and colleagues say that's not likely.

Outside experts said the work is based on compelling reasoning, but want more research to show that it's true. Breakthrough Institute climate scientist Zeke Hausfather said the new work fits better with climate models than observational data.

Just because the world is bound to get more warming than international goals, that doesn't mean all is lost in the fight against global warming, said Dessler, who cautioned against what he called "climate doomers."

If the world gets to net zero carbon emissions soon, 2 degrees of global warming could be delayed enough so that it won't happen for centuries, giving society time to adapt or even come up with technological fixes, he said.

"If we don't, we're going to blow through (climate goals) in a few decades," Dessler said. "It's really the rate of warming that makes climate change so terrible. If we got a few degrees over 100,000 years, that would not be that big a deal. We can deal with that. But a few degrees over 100 years is really bad."

---

Read stories on climate issues by The Associated Press at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>.

---

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears.

---

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## DC mayor calls in National Guard ahead of pro-Trump protests

By ASHRAF KHALIL and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bracing for possible violence, the nation's capital has mobilized the National Guard ahead of planned protests by President Donald Trump's supporters in connection with the congressional vote expected Wednesday to affirm Joe Biden's election victory.

Trump's supporters are planning to rally Tuesday and Wednesday, seeking to bolster the president's

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 67 of 87

unproven claims of widespread voter fraud. "There are people intent on coming to our city armed," D.C. Acting Police Chief Robert Contee said Monday.

A pro-Trump rally in December ended in violence as hundreds of Trump supporters, wearing the signature black and yellow of the Proud Boys faction, sought out confrontations with a collective of local activists attempting to bar them from Black Lives Matter Plaza, an area near the White House.

On Monday, Metropolitan Police Department officers arrested the leader of the Proud Boys, Henry "Enrique" Tarrío, 36, after he arrived in Washington ahead of this week's protests. Tarrío was accused of burning a Black Lives Matter banner that was torn down from a historic Black church in downtown Washington during the December protests.

A warrant had been issued for Tarrío's arrest for destruction of property, police said. He was also facing a weapons charges after officers found him with two high-capacity firearm magazines when he was arrested, a police spokesman said.

Trump has repeatedly encouraged this week's protests and hinted that he may get personally involved. Over the weekend, he retweeted a promotion for the rally with the message, "I will be there. Historic Day!"

At a November rally, which drew about 15,000 people, Trump staged a limousine drive-by past cheering crowds in Freedom Plaza, on the city's iconic Pennsylvania Avenue. And at the December rally, which drew smaller numbers but a larger contingent of Proud Boys, Trump's helicopter flew low over cheering crowds on the National Mall.

The protests coincide with Wednesday's congressional vote expected to certify the Electoral College results, which Trump continues to dispute,

Election officials from both political parties, governors in key battleground states and Trump's former attorney general, William Barr, have said there was no widespread fraud in the election. Nearly all the legal challenges from Trump and his allies have been dismissed by judges, including two rejected by the Supreme Court.

Now with downtown D.C. businesses boarding up their windows, Mayor Muriel Bowser has requested a limited National Guard deployment to help bolster the Metropolitan Police Department. During a press conference on Monday, Bowser asked that local area residents stay away from downtown D.C., and avoid confrontations with anyone who is "looking for a fight." But, she warned, "we will not allow people to incite violence, intimidate our residents or cause destruction in our city."

According to a U.S. defense official, Bowser put in a request on New Year's Eve to have Guard members on the streets from Tuesday to Thursday to help with the protests. The official said the additional forces will be used for traffic control and other assistance but they will not be armed or wearing body armor. Congress is meeting this week to certify the Electoral College results, and Trump has refused to concede while whipping up support for protests.

Some 340 D.C. National Guard members will be activated, with about 115 on duty in the streets at any given time, said the defense official, who provided details on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. The official said Guard members will be used to set up traffic control points around the city and to stand with district police officers at all the city's Metro stops. Contee said Guard troops will also be used for some crowd management.

"Some of our intelligence certainly suggests there will be increased crowd sizes," said Contee.

D.C. police have posted signs throughout downtown warning that carrying any sort of firearm is illegal and Contee asked area residents to warn authorities of anyone who might be armed.

Because D.C. does not have a governor, the designated commander of the city's National Guard is Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy. Any D.C. requests for Guard deployments have to be approved by him.

The defense official said that there will be no active duty military troops in the city, and the U.S. military will not be providing any aircraft or intelligence. The D.C. Guard will provide specialized teams that will be prepared to respond to any chemical or biological incident. But the official said there will be no D.C. Guard members on the National Mall or at the U.S. Capitol.

At previous pro-Trump protests, police have sealed off Black Lives Matter Plaza itself, but the confronta-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 68 of 87

tions merely spilled out to the surrounding streets. Contee on Monday said sealing the area again was "a very real possibility" but said that decision would depend on the circumstances.

"We know that historically over the last few demonstrations that BLM plaza has been a focal point," Contee said. "We want to make sure that that is not an issue."

The National Park Service has received three separate applications for pro-Trump protests on Tuesday or Wednesday, with estimated maximum attendance at around 15,000 people, said Park Service spokesman Mike Litterst. On Monday, a stage was being assembled for one of the protests on The Ellipse, just south of the White House.

Organizers plan to rally on Tuesday evening at Freedom Plaza and again all day Wednesday on the Ellipse, including a 1 p.m. Wednesday march to the Capitol. Expected attendees include high-level Trump supporters like Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and Republican strategist Roger Stone, a longtime Trump devotee whose three-year prison sentence was commuted by Trump. Stone was convicted of repeatedly lying to Congress during the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

During the Dec. 12 pro-Trump protests, at least two local Black churches had Black Lives Matter banners torn down and set ablaze. Contee said the hate-crimes investigation into those incidents was still ongoing and that his officers would be out in force around area churches to prevent similar incidents.

"We will be increasing our visibility around the churches in the area," he said.

On Monday the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law filed a lawsuit in D.C. Superior Court against the Proud Boys and Tarrío on behalf of one of the vandalized churches, Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church.

"We will not allow white supremacist violence to go unchecked by the laws of the land," Rev. William H Lamar IV, pastor of Metropolitan AME, said in a statement.

Associated Press writers Elana Schor, Michael Kunzelman and Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

## Trump rewards ally Devin Nunes with Medal of Freedom

By ZEKE MILLER and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom to one of his most outspoken congressional allies, California Rep. Devin Nunes, as he looks to reward loyalists with just over two weeks left in his term.

Nunes, the former chair of the House Intelligence Committee, has been an ardent backer of Trump's during probes into Russian interference in the 2016 election and the president's 2019 impeachment by the Democratic-led House.

In a statement, the White House credited Nunes with uncovering "the greatest scandal in American history," referencing Nunes' efforts to discredit the Russia investigation.

U.S. intelligence agencies and multiple congressional committees concluded that Russia interfered in the 2016 election with the aim of boosting Trump's candidacy. Several Trump aides and associates, including former national security adviser Michael Flynn, were convicted or pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI in the course of special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation. Flynn, among others, was issued a presidential pardon last month.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom, established by President John F. Kennedy, is meant to recognize those who have made an "especially meritorious contribution" to national security, world peace or "cultural or other significant public or private endeavors."

The award comes as Trump has been rewarding supporters with the perks and prestige associated with serving on a host of federal advisory boards and commissions before he leaves office on Jan. 20.

Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan, one of the GOP leaders trying to undermine confidence in the results of the 2020 presidential election won by Democrat Joe Biden, is expected to receive the award next week. Trump's intent to present the award to the lawmakers was first reported by The Washington Post.

## Statehouses could prove to be hothouses for virus infection

By AMY BETH HANSON Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — As lawmakers around the U.S. convene this winter to deal with the crisis created by the pandemic, statehouses themselves could prove to be hothouses for infection.

Many legislatures will start the year meeting remotely, but some Republican-controlled statehouses, from Montana to Pennsylvania, plan to hold at least part of their sessions in person, without requiring masks. Public health officials say that move endangers the safety of other lawmakers, staffers, lobbyists, the public and the journalists responsible for holding politicians accountable.

The risk is more than mere speculation: An ongoing tally by The Associated Press finds that more than 250 state lawmakers across the country have contracted COVID-19, and at least seven have died.

The Montana Legislature convened Monday without masking rules. The Republican majority shot down recent Democratic requests to hold the session remotely or delay it until vaccines are more widely available. Failing that, Democrats asked for requirements on masks and virus testing, which were also rejected.

Democratic lawmakers wore masks as they were sworn in. Few Republicans did the same.

"If the session is held without public health precautions, it is highly likely that the virus will spread in that environment, and it's highly likely that we'll see serious illness and, God forbid, deaths come from that," said Drenda Niemann, the health officer in Lewis and Clark County, which includes the state capital of Helena.

Rather than address COVID-19 guidelines ahead of the session, Republicans decided to address them after lawmakers convene by creating a panel that will meet regularly to consider updating policies. The Senate president pro tem, Republican Jason Ellsworth, said the panel "allows us to be more fluid with the situation" and "allows for our personal freedoms and our responsibilities."

The divergent approaches to the virus — with Republican lawmakers mostly rejecting mask mandates and lockdown measures, and Democrats urging a more cautious approach — mirrors that of Americans generally. That contrast was reflected over the holidays, when millions of people hit the roads and airports despite pleas from health officials to avoid travel and family gatherings to help contain the virus, which has claimed more than 350,000 American lives.

Some legislatures are trying to strike a balance between conducting business in person and protecting against the disease.

The 400-member New Hampshire House plans to hold its first session day Wednesday with a drive-in event at the University of New Hampshire in what acting Speaker Sherm Packard called the body's "most risk-mitigated session" yet during the pandemic.

The House clerk and speaker will conduct business from a heated platform, and members can watch and listen via a screen or through their car radios. Microphones will be brought to their windows for questions and debate, and voting will be conducted via electronic devices.

New Hampshire House Speaker Dick Hinch, a Republican, died from COVID-19 on Dec. 9, a week after being sworn in during an outdoor gathering at UNH. Democrats have pushed for remote gatherings.

Legislatures in Alaska, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Washington are requiring masks, but the requirement is not being enforced in Pennsylvania. Lack of enforcement is a concern for news outlets that have to balance their ability to cover events with the safety of their reporters.

"If we start getting into a high-profile issue and there's a scrum of reporters shouting questions to a legislator who's unmasked, it couldn't be a worse situation," said Paula Knudsen Burke, with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in Pennsylvania.

In Idaho, where lawmakers are not required to wear masks, Melissa Davlin of Idaho Public Television said media outlets are trying to keep reporters safe while also ensuring adequate access to lawmakers, many of whom are not adhering to the same public safety guidelines as newsrooms.

Casual hallway conversations "are so valuable for coverage and insight and even just background," Davlin said. "Missing out on that is a real loss for our ability to cover the session. But at the same time, we are not going to do our viewers and readers any good if we get sick."

Republicans in the Ohio House have blocked efforts to enforce a mask mandate, despite the fact that more than a dozen lawmakers there have tested positive for COVID-19.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 70 of 87

Incoming Ohio Senate President Matt Huffman was to be sworn into office from his home Monday after testing positive for COVID-19. Huffman experienced mild symptoms and will return to the statehouse after a quarantine period, spokesperson John Fortney said.

In conservative Wyoming, where Republican Gov. Mark Gordon did not issue a mask mandate until early December, lawmakers plan to convene virtually Jan. 12 to hear the governor's State of the State address. Legislative leaders will decide later whether to begin a virtual session in February or hold an in-person session starting in March, the Wyoming Tribune Eagle reported.

Wyoming Republican Rep. Roy Edwards died a day before Election Day of what his family later confirmed was COVID-19. Edwards spoke in opposition to public health restrictions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus during his campaign.

In Montana, all floor sessions and committee meetings will be available to view or hear online, and lawmakers will be allowed to attend many hearings virtually, but voting on final bills by proxy is discouraged. Members of the public and lobbyists will be able to testify on bills using video conferencing, if they have access to the technology.

"I feel like that's going to preferentially kind of censor the people who are either vulnerable or who actually value the advice that experts are putting out," said M. Kumi Smith, assistant professor of epidemiology and community health at the University of Minnesota.

Ellsworth, the Republican Senate leader, acknowledged that the Legislature's COVID-19 panel will not solve everything.

"At the end of the day, this is an animal that we can't control," he said of the pandemic during a rules hearing on Dec. 16. "I would imagine we are going to have members that are going to get sick. It's possible that we have members that die. But that possibility is there irregardless, even if we're here or not."

Associated Press writers Holly Ramer in Concord, New Hampshire, and Farnoush Amiri in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

## GA election officials reject Trump call to 'find' more votes

By JEFF AMY, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump pressured Georgia's Republican secretary of state to "find" enough votes to overturn Joe Biden's win in the state's presidential election, repeatedly citing disproven claims of fraud and raising the prospect of a "criminal offense" if officials did not change the vote count, according to a recording of the conversation.

The phone call with Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger on Saturday was the latest step in an unprecedented effort by a sitting president to press a state official to reverse the outcome of a free and fair election that he lost. The Republican president, who has refused to accept his loss to Democratic President-elect Biden, repeatedly argued that Raffensperger could change the certified results.

"I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have. Because we won the state," said Trump, who is scheduled to be at a rally in Georgia Monday evening.

In an interview Monday, Raffensperger told The Associated Press that he is confident in Georgia's general election outcome, despite an electoral college challenge supported by some Republicans in Congress.

"If they support a challenge of the electors for Georgia, they're wrong, dead wrong," Raffensperger said. Members of Congress will have to make a decision about the other states, he added, "but in Georgia, we did get it right. I'm not happy with the result, as a Republican, but it is the right result based on the numbers that we saw cast."

Georgia counted its votes three times before certifying Biden's win by a 11,779-vote margin.

"President Trump, we've had several lawsuits, and we've had to respond in court to the lawsuits and the contentions," Raffensperger told Trump on the call. "We don't agree that you have won."

Raffensperger said the White House reached out to his office and he assumed the president wanted to talk about the status of the November election. The secretary of state said his deputy previously met with

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 71 of 87

White House chief of staff Mark Meadows when Meadows was in Georgia last month, but that he hadn't had any other direct contact with the White House since the general election.

Asked if he felt as if the president was pressuring him to do something illegal, Raffensperger said, "I think he was looking for any kind of advantage he could get, and I just don't see how he's going to get it."

David Worley, a Democratic member of the Georgia State Election Board, sent an email to Raffensperger Sunday night requesting that his office open an investigation into the call.

"To say that I am troubled by President Trump's attempt to manipulate the votes of Georgians would be an understatement," Worley wrote.

Worley cited two violations of Georgia law that he said the president might have committed based on his reading of a transcript of the call: conspiracy to commit election fraud and criminal solicitation to commit election fraud.

Once the secretary of state's office completes an investigation, Worley wrote, the board will determine whether there is probable cause to refer the matter to the state attorney general and Fulton County district attorney.

Audio of the conversation was first posted online by The Washington Post. The Associated Press later obtained the audio from a person on the call.

Trump's renewed intervention and the persistent and unfounded claims of fraud came nearly two weeks before he leaves office and two days before twin runoff elections in Georgia that will determine which political party controls the U.S. Senate.

At Trump's rally in Georgia on Monday night, he is supposed to boost the two Republican candidates in close races. In a rage after the Raffensperger call, Trump floated the idea of pulling out of the rally, which would have potentially devastated GOP chances of maintaining Senate control.

But Trump was persuaded to go ahead with the rally as a stage from which to reiterate his claims of election fraud and to present, as he tweeted Monday, the "real numbers" from the race. Republicans, though, were wary as to whether Trump would focus only on himself and potentially depress turnout by undermining faith in the runoff elections and not promoting the two GOP candidates.

The president used Saturday's hourlong phone conversation to tick through a list of claims about the election in Georgia, including that hundreds of thousands of ballots mysteriously appeared in Fulton County, which includes Atlanta. Officials have said there is no evidence of that happening.

Also during the conversation, Trump appeared to threaten Raffensperger and Ryan Germany, the secretary of state's legal counsel, by suggesting both could be criminally liable if they failed to find that thousands of ballots in Fulton County had been illegally destroyed. There is no evidence to support Trump's claim.

"That's a criminal offense," Trump says. "And you can't let that happen."

Others on the call included Mark Meadows, the White House chief of staff, and attorneys assisting Trump, including Washington lawyer Cleta Mitchell. Trump lost the Electoral College to Biden by 74 votes, and even if Georgia, with its 16 votes, were to end up in his column, it would have no impact on the result of the election.

The call was the first time Raffensperger and Trump spoke, though the White House had tried 18 previous times to set up a conversation, according to officials.

Democrats and a few Republicans condemned Trump's actions. Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, a member of the GOP House leadership team, deemed the call "deeply troubling." And Democratic Reps. Ted Lieu of California and Kathleen Rice of New York made a criminal referral to FBI Director Christopher Wray and called for an investigation into the president.

Trump said in a tweet Sunday that he had spoken with Raffensperger. He attacked how Raffensperger conducted Georgia's elections, tweeting, "He has no clue!" and he said the state official "was unwilling, or unable" to answer questions.

Raffensperger's Twitter response: "Respectfully, President Trump: What you're saying is not true. The truth will come out."

Various election officials across the country and Trump's former attorney general, William Barr, have said there was no widespread fraud in the election. Republican governors in Arizona and Georgia, key

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 72 of 87

battleground states crucial to Biden's victory, have also vouched for the integrity of their state elections. Nearly all the legal challenges from Trump and his allies have been dismissed by judges, including two tossed by the Supreme Court, which has three Trump-nominated justices.

Still, Trump has publicly disparaged the election, raising concerns among Republicans that GOP voters may be discouraged from participating in Tuesday's runoffs pitting Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler against Democrat Raphael Warnock and Republican David Perdue against Democrat Jon Ossoff.

Biden also campaigned in Georgia on Monday. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris stumped in Garden City, Georgia, on Sunday, slamming Trump for the call.

"It was a bald, bald-faced, bold abuse of power by the president of the United States," she said.

Loeffler and Perdue have largely backed Trump in his attempts to overturn election results. But on Sunday, Loeffler said she hadn't decided whether to join her Republican colleagues in challenging the legitimacy of Biden's victory over Trump when Congress meets Wednesday to affirm Biden's 306-232 win in the Electoral College.

Perdue, who was quarantining after being exposed to the coronavirus, said he supports the challenge, though he will not be a sitting senator when the vote happens because his term has expired. Still, he told Fox News Channel he was encouraging his colleagues to object, saying it's "something that the American people demand right now."

Amy reported from Atlanta. Lemire reported from New York. Additional reporting contributed by Associated Press writers Kate Brumback in Atlanta, Russ Bynum in Garden City, Ga., and Zeke Miller in Washington.

## Biden largely mum on Trump's effort to reverse election

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden is mostly steering clear of the controversy engulfing President Donald Trump's final days in office, aiming to project the different approach to governing Americans can expect when he moves into the White House on Jan. 20.

Biden and his team have offered a muted response to Trump's efforts to overturn the election, which reached a new level this past weekend when he pressured Georgia's Republican secretary of state to "find" enough votes to flip the state in his favor.

While some Democrats say Trump's actions merit new impeachment proceedings, Biden has been more circumspect. He didn't address the matter directly during his visit to Georgia Monday afternoon where he campaigned for two Democratic Senate candidates, only hinting at Trump's efforts to reverse the result of the election by joking, "I don't know why he still wants the job — he doesn't want to do the work."

Biden later spoke broadly about Democrats' "opposition friends" realizing that "power flows from the people."

"Politicians cannot assert, take or seize power. Power is granted by the American people alone," he said.

His comments followed a brief written statement from senior adviser Bob Bauer this weekend decrying Trump's "assault on American democracy."

The low-key approach is in keeping with Biden's overall strategy to focus on preparing to assume the presidency even as Trump goes to ever-greater lengths to sow doubt about the election results. The relatively muted response reflects an effort to reassure Americans that Biden will take a starkly different approach to leading during a time of historic turmoil over the coronavirus pandemic and the economy.

"The country is ready to move forward, and President-elect Biden is going to remain focused on the work ahead of us in completing a successful transition and putting together an administration that will get this virus under control and build our economy back better," said Biden adviser Kate Bedingfield.

Biden's aides believe Americans outside Washington want to hear more about how the Biden presidency will help them and less about the partisan squabbling that has characterized the past four years of Trump's presidency.

So while Biden has chosen his moments to weigh in on Trump's attacks on the election results — he de-



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 73 of 87

livered a speech denouncing Trump's actions after the Electoral College certified his win in mid-December — he's largely focused on his Cabinet nominees and fleshing out his response to the pandemic.

And while some Democrats on Capitol Hill have raised the prospect of impeachment, Democratic leadership has emphasized that the party's focus is on Biden's agenda rather than on Trump's malfeasance.

"We're not looking backward. We're looking forward to the inauguration of Joe Biden on January 20th," said House Democratic Caucus Chair Hakeem Jeffries during a press conference Monday.

The strategy is informed by the reality that Trump's complaints have been repeatedly rebuffed by members of his own party and administration and are running out of oxygen as Biden's inauguration draws near.

There was no widespread fraud in the election, which a range of election officials across the country, as well as Trump's former attorney general, William Barr, has confirmed. Republican governors in Arizona and Georgia, key battleground states crucial to Biden's victory, have vouched for the integrity of the elections in their states. Nearly all the legal challenges from Trump and his allies have been dismissed by judges, including two tossed by the Supreme Court, where three Trump-nominated justices preside.

Biden's team of lawyers have kept tabs on the legal challenges in the states and weighed in when they believed it was necessary. But his aides say taking on Trump every time he raises a new, baseless complaint gives the president exactly what he wants and doesn't deserve: attention and credibility.

"Donald Trump's attack on our democracy has failed, and his baseless claims of voter fraud have been debunked across the board, including by dozens of courts and his own attorney general," Bedingfield said.

Trump's next big stand comes Wednesday, when some Republicans in the House and Senate plan to protest Biden's win as Congress formally ratifies his victory, and thousands of Trump supporters will descend on the Capitol for a march.

But that show of protest faces its own challenges as even some of Trump's staunchest allies on Capitol Hill have dismissed the move. Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton, a longtime Trump supporter who may seek the White House in 2024, said in a statement that he would reject the gambit because it would "establish unwise precedents."

"Congress would take away the power to choose the president from the people, which would essentially end presidential elections and place that power in the hands of whichever party controls Congress," Cotton said.

Indeed, by avoiding engaging with Trump, Biden is also hoping to maintain the opportunity for bipartisanship in the new Congress, which he's repeatedly emphasized will be key to his hopes of getting anything done. Going after Trump too aggressively could further politicize his presidency before it even begins.

But some Democrats warn that there are risks to staying above the fray.

Jim Manley, a former longtime Senate Democratic leadership aide, said the party's failure to take on Trump's recent moves could set the tone for Biden's presidency and beyond.

"The risk is that it affirms for not only future presidents, but also Republicans in the House and the Senate, that there are no consequences for breaking the rules," he said. "The fear is that doing nothing will embolden Republicans, some of whom were teetering on the edge of sedition to ramp up their efforts to undermine Biden's presidency."

Trump has indicated he has no plans to go away quietly, floating a possible 2024 run, blanketing social media with incendiary posts and threatening Republicans who break with his complaints about the election results. He's certain to continue to marshal his sizable base in support of his post-presidential plans — or in opposition to Biden's.

And while Democrats on Capitol Hill publicly emphasize the need to stay focused on Biden's proposals, they privately express concerns about the tone they say Republicans are setting for the Biden presidency by protesting the certification of his win.

According to Democratic strategist Andrew Feldman, the prospect of continued obstruction from Republicans and complaints about the legitimacy of Biden's presidency make it all the more important that Biden stay laser-focused on enacting his agenda even in the middle of the political din.

"The Republicans aren't going to let up here. We're going to be dealing with a narrative for the next four years about Biden being an illegitimate president," he said. "We are going to have to combat that — not

only with messaging, but with real results that help the American people.”

## UK prime minister orders new virus lockdown for England

By DANICA KIRKA and SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Monday a new national lockdown for England until at least mid-February to combat a fast-spreading new variant of the coronavirus, even as Britain ramped up its vaccination program by becoming the first nation to start using the shot developed by Oxford University and drugmaker AstraZeneca.

Johnson said people must stay at home again, as they were ordered to do so in the first wave of the pandemic in March, this time because the new virus variant was spreading in a “frustrating and alarming” way.

“As I speak to you tonight, our hospitals are under more pressure from COVID than at any time since the start of the pandemic,” he said in a televised address.

From Tuesday, primary and secondary schools and colleges will be closed for face to face learning except for the children of key workers and vulnerable pupils. University students will not be returning until at least mid-February. People were told to work from home unless it’s impossible to do so, and leave home only for essential trips.

All nonessential shops and personal care services like hairdressers will be closed, and restaurants can only operate takeout services.

As of Monday, there were 26,626 COVID-19 patients in hospitals in England, an increase of more than 30% from a week ago. That is 40% above the highest level of the first wave in the spring.

Large areas of England were already under tight restrictions as officials try to control an alarming surge in coronavirus cases in recent weeks, blamed on a new variant of COVID-19 that is more contagious than existing variants. Authorities have recorded more than 50,000 new infections daily since passing that milestone for the first time on Dec. 29. On Monday, they reported 407 virus-related deaths to push the confirmed death toll total to 75,431, one of the worst in Europe.

The U.K.’s chief medical officers warned that without further action, “there is a material risk of the National Health Service in several areas being overwhelmed over the next 21 days.”

Hours earlier, Scotland’s leader, Nicola Sturgeon, also imposed a lockdown there with broadly similar restrictions from Tuesday until the end of January.

“I am more concerned about the situation we face now than I have been at any time since March last year,” Sturgeon said in Edinburgh.

The announcements came on the day U.K. health authorities began putting the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine into arms around the country, fueling hopes that life may begin returning to normal by the spring.

“The weeks ahead will be the hardest yet but I really do believe that we’re entering the last phase of the struggle,” Johnson said.

Britain has secured the rights to 100 million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, which is cheaper and easier to use than some of its rivals. In particular, it doesn’t require the super-cold storage needed for the Pfizer vaccine.

The new vaccine will be administered at a small number of hospitals for the first few days so authorities can watch out for any adverse reactions. Officials said hundreds of new vaccination sites — including local doctors’ offices — will open later this week, joining the more than 700 vaccination sites already in operation.

A “massive ramp-up operation” is now underway, Johnson said. The goal was that by mid-February, some 13 million people in the top priority groups — care home residents, all those over 70 years old, frontline health and social workers, and those deemed extremely clinically vulnerable — will be vaccinated, he said.

Brian Pinker, an 82-year-old dialysis patient, received the first Oxford-AstraZeneca shot early Monday at Oxford University Hospital.

“The nurses, doctors and staff today have all been brilliant, and I can now really look forward to celebrating my 48th wedding anniversary with my wife, Shirley, later this year,” Pinker said in a statement

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 75 of 87

released by the National Health Service.

But aspects of Britain's vaccination plan have spurred controversy.

Both vaccines require two shots, and Pfizer had recommended that the second dose be given within 21 days of the first. But the U.K.'s Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunization said authorities should give the first vaccine dose to as many people as possible, rather than setting aside shots to ensure others receive two doses. It has stretched out the time between the doses from 21 days to within 12 weeks.

While two doses are required to fully protect against COVID-19, both vaccines provide high levels of protection after the first dose, the committee said. Making the first dose the priority will "maximize benefits from the vaccination program in the short term," it said.

Stephen Evans, a professor of pharmacoepidemiology at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, said policymakers are being forced to balance the potential risks of this change against the benefits in the middle of a deadly pandemic.

"As has become clear to everyone during 2020, delays cost lives," Evans said. "When resources of doses and people to vaccinate are limited, then vaccinating more people with potentially less efficacy is demonstrably better than a fuller efficacy in only half."

Monday's urgent announcement was yet another change of course for Johnson, who had stuck with a regional alert system that stipulated varying restrictions for areas depending on the severity of local infections. London and large areas of southeast England were put under the highest level of restrictions in mid-December, and more regions soon joined them.

But it soon became clear that the regional approach wasn't working to tamp down the spread of the virus, and critics have been clamoring for a tougher national lockdown.

And while schools in London were already closed due to high infection rates in the capital, Johnson had said that students in many parts of the country could return to classrooms on Monday after the Christmas holidays, to the dismay of teachers' unions.

"We are relieved the government has finally bowed to the inevitable and agreed to move schools and colleges to remote education in response to alarming COVID infection rates," said Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders.

---

Jill Lawless contributed to this report.

---

Follow AP coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at:

<https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

<https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine>

<https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## Men's March Madness will be played entirely in Indiana

By MICHAEL MAROT AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The NCAA is giving Indiana an exclusive ticket to showcase March Madness and the basketball-crazed state can't wait to take center stage this spring.

The NCAA announced Monday that its showcase event — the Division I men's basketball tournament, all 67 games of it — will be played entirely in or near Indianapolis. The hope is to limit the possibility that the coronavirus pandemic cancels the wildly popular and lucrative tournament for a second consecutive season.

"There are a number of world-class facilities in a close location and that was critical because you have to run a large number of games simultaneously that you can manage and control," NCAA President Mark Emmert said. "There were a number of cities that were very interested in hosting this event, but the immediate opportunity to do this in Indianapolis was pretty self-evident for several reasons. For one, we were already going to be there."

Indy was already scheduled to host the Final Four and it didn't take long for the city to emerge as the favorite.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 76 of 87**

The original plan was for the 67 games to be played at 13 sites across the country, starting with the First Four in Dayton, Ohio. Regional sites were set for Minneapolis, Denver, New York City and Memphis, Tennessee.

Instead, the buzzer beaters and jaw-dropping performances will all take place in a state known perhaps more than any other for its love of basketball.

"I really don't care if they play the tournament on Saturn or in Indianapolis," Louisville coach Chris Mack said. "Hopefully, we're a part of it and we do our part to get there. And wherever they put it, they put it."

Logistically, Indy made sense, too.

Dozens of restaurants or hotels are within walking distance of Lucas Oil Stadium, home of the NFL's Indianapolis Colts, and Bankers Life Fieldhouse, home of the NBA's Indiana Pacers and WNBA's Indiana Fever. Many of those businesses and venues are connected by skywalks that allow players, coaches or fans to stay indoors.

Hinkle Fieldhouse, the historic home of the Butler Bulldogs, and the Indiana Farmers Coliseum, where the IUPUI Jaguars play, are just short drives from the downtown area. Mackey Arena at Purdue and Assembly Hall at Indiana also are about an hour's drive from downtown.

All of those venues are slated to host games.

Playing in a state where the sport is revered and basketball stars are considered royalty doesn't hurt, either. Oscar Robertson, Larry Bird, Rick Mount, Damon Bailey and the late John Wooden were all stars here at one level or another. Bob Knight, Gene Keady and the late Tony Hinkle, originator of the orange basketball, all coached in the state, which for decades had a single-class state tournament won famously in 1954 by Milan High, the inspiration for Hollywood's "Hoosiers."

So perhaps bringing March Madness back home to Indiana, home of the NCAA's headquarters, was the natural choice..

"Last year, we had to rip March Madness away from all the teams and all the fans at the very last minute," Emmert said. "We know it was the right thing to do, but it was a painful thing to do. So we want to deliver this year on the promise of March Madness. They deserve it."

Some things aren't expected to change.

Selection Sunday is still set for March 14, the tourney field is expected to remain at 68 and the Final Four games are still scheduled for April 3 with the title game two days later. CBS Sports and Turner Sports will continue to televise and stream the games.

But this tourney will have dramatically a different atmosphere.

Two courts will be constructed inside cavernous Lucas Oil Stadium, though only one game will be played at a time because of potential distractions from whistles and horns going off. NCAA vice president of basketball Dan Gavitt said fewer games may be played each day because of longer breaks needed to properly clean the facilities. Preliminary round dates have not yet been set.

"If we're going to be able to do it, it's got to be done safely," Creighton coach Greg McDermott said. "The more you can limit travel the better. To do it in the middle of the country makes it easier for everybody. ... You want to be there, you want to be part of it. It's going to be an historic event."

Fewer fans are expected, too.

NCAA officials said a limited number of family members of players and coaches can attend games, but they will consult local and state public health officials to determine final attendance.

COVID-19 testing will be conducted before each game and each team will be assigned its own floor and its own meeting spaces inside its hotel.

"We've very intentionally talked about this being a controlled environment," Gavitt said. "The NBA and WNBA had much more of a bubble. We're not going to be able to create that specifically but we will come incredibly close to that."

Gavitt cautioned that the holding the tournament will present many challenges. Scores of college basketball games have been canceled or postponed this season because of COVID-19 issues, with games called off on a near-daily basis.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 77 of 87

Emmert said an announcement about the Division I women's tournament is expected soon. San Antonio, which was scheduled to host this year's women's Final Four, is believed to be the front-runner for a potentially similar tourney.

Evansville, an southern Indiana city just across the Ohio River from Kentucky, will host the Division II championship, while Fort Wayne, in northeastern Indiana, will host the Division III championship.

AP Sports Writers Eric Olson in Omaha, Nebraska and Gary B. Graves in Louisville contributed to this report.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and [http://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](http://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## **VIRUS TODAY: Vaccination efforts to end COVID-19 accelerate**

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Monday with the pandemic in the U.S.:

### THREE THINGS TO KNOW TODAY

— The campaign to vanquish the coronavirus is picking up speed. Britain has begun dispensing the second vaccine in its arsenal. And India, the world's second-most populous country, has authorized its first shots. In the U.S., meanwhile, government officials say that the pace of vaccinations has accelerated markedly after a disappointingly slow start. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, said over the weekend that 1.5 million shots were dispensed over 72 hours, bringing the running total to about 4 million.

— As states brace for a coronavirus surge following holiday gatherings, one surprising place stands out as a potential super-spreader — the statehouses where lawmakers will help shape the response to the pandemic. Many legislatures will start the year meeting remotely, but numerous Republican-controlled statehouses are planning to hold their sessions at least partially in-person without requiring or enforcing mask-wearing. Public health officials say those decisions endanger the safety of other lawmakers, staffers, lobbyists, the public and journalists. Associated Press data shows more than 230 state lawmakers across the country have contracted COVID-19 and at least seven have died.

— New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio says the city will set up 250 city-run COVID-19 vaccination sites this month in a push to administer 1 million vaccine doses by the end of January. Just over 100,000 people have been vaccinated in the city since the inoculations began on Dec. 14. But de Blasio said Monday that immunizations will speed up now that people see that the two vaccines that have been approved for emergency use in the U.S. are safe. De Blasio said he is pushing for the shots to be available to essential workers including police officers, firefighters and teachers.

**THE NUMBERS:** The seven-day rolling average for daily new deaths in the U.S. rose over the past two weeks from 2,625 on December 20 to 2,637.4 on January 3, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

**DEATH TOLL:** The number of COVID-19-related deaths in the U.S. stands at 351,590.

**QUOTABLE:** Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, said the recent marked increase in vaccinations shows "some little glimmer of hope" in the fight against the coronavirus.

**ICYMI:** Thousands of minority-owned small businesses were at the end of the line in the government's coronavirus relief program as many struggled to find banks to accept their applications. Or, they were disadvantaged by the program's terms. Data from the Paycheck Protection Program analyzed by The Associated Press show many minority owners desperate for a loan didn't receive one until the PPP's last weeks. Meanwhile, many more companies owned by whites were able to get loans. The program helped many businesses survive the first months of the virus outbreak. But it struggled to meet its promise of aiding communities that historically haven't gotten needed help.

**ON THE HORIZON:** For Dr. David Tom Cooke, participating in the clinical trial for Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine was one step in his efforts to allay concerns about the vaccine's safety in the Black community.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 78 of 87

Cooke, who is Black, is the head of general thoracic surgery at UC Davis Health and just one of many health care providers and community leaders who personally understand many Black Americans' skepticism toward the medical profession. He's now sharing details about his experience in an effort to build trust. Black Americans have been hit harder by the coronavirus than others but are more likely to distrust the vaccine because of a history of poor health outcomes and abusive medical research.

Find AP's full coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

## Slack kicks off 2021 with a global outage

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

Slack, the messaging service used by millions of people for work and school, suffered a global outage on Monday, the first day back for most people returning from the New Year's holiday.

It's the latest tech glitch to show how disruptive technical difficulties can be when millions of people are depending on just a few services to work and go to school from home during the pandemic.

The company stopped releasing its daily user count after topping 12 million last year.

"Our team is currently investigating and we're sorry for any troubles this may be causing," Slack said in a prepared statement.

The outage began around 10 a.m. Eastern time and disrupted service in the U.S., Germany, India, the U.K., Japan and elsewhere. At 12:30 p.m., service was still sporadic and Slack said the outage was ongoing, but that some users may begin to see improvement. Slack said that people should check <https://status.slack.com> for updates. Most issues were resolved by 3 p.m. on Monday afternoon.

Internet service outages are not uncommon, are usually resolved relatively swiftly and are only rarely the result of hacking or other intentional mischief. Google went down briefly in December, with people in several countries briefly unable to access their Gmail accounts, watch YouTube videos or get to their online documents during an outage Monday. In August, Zoom went down briefly just as many students were beginning the school year at home. And in September, Microsoft services had an outage that lasted for five hours.

More complaints rolled in as the sun hit the West coast and there were still outages four hours after it began in New York City.

The outage comes about a month after Salesforce.com said it would acquire Slack for \$27.7 billion. The companies hope to be better able to compete against Microsoft, which is a threat to both of them.

Slack is being acquired by Salesforce.com for \$27.7 billion. The deal is aimed at giving the two companies a better shot at competing against longtime industry powerhouse Microsoft.

Microsoft Teams is a direct competitor to Slack and it is a software giant that competes with Salesforce.

## Google workers form new labor union, a tech industry rarity

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

A group of Google engineers and other workers announced Monday they have formed a union, creating a rare foothold for the labor movement in the tech industry.

About 225 employees at Google and its parent company Alphabet are the first dues-paying members of the Alphabet Workers Union. They represent a fraction of Alphabet's workforce, far short of the threshold needed to get formal recognition as a collective bargaining group in the U.S.

But the new union, which will be affiliated with the larger Communication Workers of America, says it will serve as a "structure that ensures Google workers can actively push for real changes at the company." Its members say they want more of a voice not just on wages, benefits and protections against discrimination and harassment but also broader ethical questions about how Google pursues its business ventures.

The unionization campaign is the latest signal from employees who don't believe the company is living up to its professed ideals, as expressed in its original "Don't be evil" slogan.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 79 of 87

Google said Monday that it's tried to create a supportive and rewarding workplace but suggested it won't be negotiating directly with the union.

"Of course our employees have protected labor rights that we support," said a statement from Kara Silverstein, the company's director of people operations. "But as we've always done, we'll continue engaging directly with all our employees."

Unionization campaigns haven't historically been able to gain much traction among elite tech workers, who get hefty salaries and other perks like free food and shuttle rides to work. But workplace activism at Google and other big tech firms has grown in recent years as employees call for better handling of sexual harassment and discrimination and avoiding harmful uses of the products they're helping to build and sell.

Many employees began seeing the power of their workplace activism in 2018 when an internal outcry led Google to abandon its work supplying the Pentagon with artificial intelligence services for conflict zones. Later in 2018, thousands of Google employees walked out to protest how the company handled sexual misconduct allegations against executives.

Google software engineer Chewy Shaw, who has been elected to the new union's executive council, said he and others decided to form the group after seeing colleagues pushed out of their roles for their activism.

"We want to have a counterforce to protect workers who are speaking up," Shaw said.

The latest examples came last month, when prominent AI ethics researcher Timnit Gebru says she was fired over a research paper that Google wanted to disassociate from; and as a federal labor agency filed a complaint accusing the company of spying on employees and then firing some of them during a 2019 effort to organize a union. Google has denied the allegations in the case, which is scheduled for an April hearing.

The union's first members include engineers, as well as sales associates, administrative assistants and the workers who test self-driving vehicles at Alphabet automotive division Waymo. Many work at Google's Silicon Valley headquarters, while others are at offices in Massachusetts, New York and Colorado.

"One of the reasons why it's taken a while for workers to get to this point is because the leaders of these companies did a good job of convincing workers they were these benevolent folks who were going to provide for them, kind of a paternalistic model," said Beth Allen, communications director at the CWA.

"That got them a long way," Allen said, but workers have increasingly realized they need "to come together and build power for themselves and have a voice in what's going on."

The National Labor Relations Board typically recognizes petitions to form new unions when they get interest from at least 30% of employees in a given location or job classification in the U.S.; a majority of affected workers must then vote to form one. Alphabet has a global workforce of roughly 130,000.

Allen said the Alphabet Workers Union is not currently planning to pursue official recognition as a collective bargaining group. Instead, she said it will work similarly to public sector unions in states that don't allow public employees to bargain collectively.

"We'd love to get direct legal representation but the focus right now is we're not going to depend on that," Shaw said.

## Fiat Chrysler, Peugeot shareholders approve merger

By COLLEEN BARRY and TOM KRISHER AP Business Writers

MILAN (AP) — Shareholders of Fiat Chrysler and PSA Peugeot voted Monday to merge and create the world's fourth-largest auto company which, its architects hope, can more readily take on an enormous technological shift in the industry.

Addressing separate meetings, PSA Peugeot CEO Carlos Tavares and Fiat Chrysler Chairman John Elkann spoke of the "historic" importance of the merger, which combines car companies that helped write the industrial histories of the United States, France and Italy. Tavares will run the new company, while Elkann stays on as chairman.

The only real hurdle left to closing the deal is listing shares of the new company, to be called Stellantis. The companies expect it to be finalized Jan. 16, with shares in the combined company trading on Jan. 18 in Milan and Paris and Jan. 19 on the New York Stock Exchange. Fiat Chrysler shares were up 0.2% in

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 80 of 87

New York on Monday at \$18.13, while Peugeot rose 1.7% to 22.75 euros.

Fiat Chrysler announced Monday that its stockholders as of Jan. 15 will get a special cash payment worth 1.84 euros (\$2.26) per common share after the merger closes. The payments will cost 2.9 billion euros (\$3.56 billion).

The new company will have the capacity to produce 8.7 million cars a year, behind Volkswagen, Toyota and Renault-Nissan, and create 5 billion euros in annual savings.

The marriage of the Italian-American and French rivals is built on the promise of cost savings in the capital-hungry industry during a technological shift to electrified powertrains and autonomous driving. But what remains to be seen is if it will be able to preserve jobs and heritage brands in a global market still suffering from the pandemic.

"Together we will be stronger than individually," Tavares told a virtual gathering of shareholders. "The two companies are in good health. These two companies have strong positions in their markets."

The new company will put together French mass-market carmakers Peugeot and Citroen, top-selling Jeep, and Italian luxury and sports brands Maserati and Alfa Romeo - pooling brands with histories spanning from 75 to over 120 years with strong emotional pull in their home markets.

"We are living through a profound era of change in our industry," said Elkann, heir to the Fiat-founding Agnelli family and Fiat Chrysler's biggest shareholder. "We believe that the coming decade will redefine mobility as we know it."

While the tie-up is billed as a merger of equals, the power advantage goes to PSA, with Tavares running Stellantis and holding the tie-breaking vote on the 11-seat board. Tavares is set to take control of the company early this year, possibly by the end of January.

Fiat Chrysler CEO Mike Manley will head North American operations, which is key to Tavares' long-time goal of getting a U.S. foothold for the French carmaker he has run since 2014, and the clear money-maker for Fiat Chrysler.

Manley said about 40% of the savings will come from combining platforms, the underpinnings of vehicles, and engines and transmissions. Another 35% of the savings will come from joint purchasing, especially with electric and high tech components, he said, while 7% will come from sales, general and administrative cost savings.

The companies will get the rest of the savings from optimizing other areas including logistics, supply chain, quality and parts sales, he said.

"We feel confident that this integration can be achieved as both companies have previously gone through significant business combinations," Manley said. "And by virtue of successful execution, they have both emerged stronger from each of them."

Such a deal was long wanted by Fiat Chrysler's longtime CEO Sergio Marchionne, who had predicted the necessity of consolidation in the industry. He was unable to find a deal before his sudden death in July 2018.

Tavares comes into the new role with a reputation as a cost-cutter and skilled manager, qualities he put to use as head of Nissan's North American operations from 2009 to 2011 and in integrating Opel and Vauxhall into the PSA Peugeot family after buying them in 2017. Experts say he is likely to follow a blueprint that showed little tolerance for vehicles or ventures that didn't make money.

That could put into the crosshairs any of the 14 car brands that Stellantis will house, five from PSA and nine from Fiat Chrysler. The companies also have significant overlaps in manufacturing and engineering operations in Europe.

PSA told the AP last week that decisions on brands would be communicated after the deal is closed. Fiat Chrysler said there are no plans to close any plants.

Analyst Patrick Hummel from UBS bank said he expected "immediate action to be taken right after closing, for example by bringing FCA's European product on the PSA architectures."

The French and Italian economic ministers, in a joint statement, said the new company will strengthen Europe's industrial leadership. Innovation by Stellantis will help Europe play a role in the transition toward green vehicles, they said, adding that "both governments will also pay attention to Stellantis' contribution



to industrial employment in Italy and France.”

Analysts point out that gaining cost savings is only the first of many challenges that the new company will face. Both PSA and Fiat Chrysler have poor records and infrastructure in China, and both are lagging in electrified powertrains, requiring investments that will off-set some of the savings.

PSA has set a goal of having all-electric or hybrid powertrains on its entire model range by 2025, while Fiat Chrysler has committed to electrifying 30 of its models by 2022.

Meeting those challenges will take more than restructuring prowess, said Ferdinand Dudenhoeffer of the Center for Automotive Research in Germany.

“Carlos Tavares is a restructuring guy. He knows how to restructure, but he has no ideas for a new tack,” he said.

Krisher reported from Detroit. Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.

## Black California surgeon ‘walks the walk’ on virus vaccine

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Dr. David Tom Cooke says his choice to participate in a clinical trial for a coronavirus vaccine is like his grandmother’s decision to leave the Jim Crow South to work in California’s naval shipyards during World War II. She was determined to contribute even though the country didn’t recognize her as worthy of full rights.

Today, it’s Cooke’s sense of duty and experience as a Black man that led him to test out Pfizer’s vaccine in August and make it his mission to allay concerns about its safety among Black friends, family and community members. He’s also driven by an understanding of skepticism toward the medical profession among many Black Americans, rooted in a history of poor health outcomes and abusive research.

“When you look at the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic, communities of color are disproportionately affected in regards to death,” said Cooke, head of general thoracic surgery at UC Davis Health, the Sacramento area’s major trauma center. “Therefore, it’s imperative that we enroll people of color into these clinical trials enough to show they’re effective in these really at-risk communities.”

Cooke, 48, was concerned when he saw a lack of diversity among participants in Moderna’s clinical trial. So when UC Davis had the opportunity to connect people with a trial by Pfizer, he volunteered. He got the first shot in August and recently learned he’d been given the actual vaccine.

“I felt that in order to increase enrollment in these clinical trials and make a difference in this global pandemic, I needed to walk the walk,” Cooke said.

For him, the understanding of distrust in the Black community is personal — even some of his own family didn’t plan to take the vaccine until they learned he had tried it.

His parents, former principals in Oakland public schools, still feel the need to tell any new doctor or nurse they see that their son is a Harvard-trained surgeon. That’s because they fear they won’t get quality care otherwise, he said.

“Is that warranted? Who knows? It’s hard to say. But is it understandable? Of course it is,” Cooke said.

That distrust comes from Black people being mistreated in the medical system for decades. Among the most infamous: the Tuskegee experiment, where Black men weren’t told they had syphilis or treated for it so doctors could study the disease’s progression, and the story of Henrietta Lacks, whose cells were used in pioneering medical research without her consent or compensation for her family.

A December survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research showed 40% of Black people said they would not get the coronavirus vaccine, a higher percentage than white or Hispanic people.

Distrust over unethical practices of the past also is prevalent in Native American communities, with few signing up to participate in clinical trials. That’s also tied to the quick nature of the studies, which typically may need several layers of approval from tribes.

Black, Hispanic and Native Americans have been hit harder by the virus than white Americans. A Pew

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 82 of 87

Research Center study shows 71% of Black Americans surveyed said they know someone who has been hospitalized or died from the virus, compared with 61% for Latinos and under 50% for white people and Asian Americans.

Cooke's informal effort to promote the vaccine in the Black community is one piece of a larger effort to increase the number of people who get the shots.

Sandra Lindsay, a critical care nurse at New York's Long Island Jewish Medical Center, was among the first Americans to receive a vaccine. Lindsay, who is Black, told the New York Times that her goal was to "inspire people who look like me, who are skeptical in general about taking vaccines."

Covered California, the state's insurance exchange, held a news conference last month to promote the vaccine to Black residents. Doctors and nurses from historically Black medical universities and associations nationwide recorded a video "love letter," saying they are working to ensure that respect for Black lives remains a centerpiece of coronavirus conversations.

"It is imperative that we engage with communities to address their concerns so that all of our communities can feel confident that these vaccines are safe and that they are our key to defeating this virus," said California's surgeon general, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, who is Black.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said relying on community messengers, like nonprofit groups, faith leaders and health care providers, will build trust "in a different way than we ever could from Sacramento."

For Cooke, he's been active on social media, sharing his experience with the vaccine and photos of other doctors and nurses, many Black, getting the shots. He's also given local radio and television interviews.

Growing up in Oakland and spending time at the schools where his parents worked shaped Cooke's worldview. He observed his parents as they interacted with all kinds of people, from students and parents to law enforcement and inner-city residents. He learned empathy and how to understand differing perspectives — lessons he's brought to patient care.

"It is not the responsibility for our communities of color that have been traditionally disadvantaged to trust us," Cooke said. "It is the responsibility of care providers, for health care, to establish that trust."

Associated Press writer Janie Har in San Francisco contributed.

## Ministry roiled by late founder's sexual misconduct scandal

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A posthumous sexual misconduct scandal involving the man who founded, in his own name, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries has placed the global Christian organization in a wrenching predicament. It faces calls from within its own ranks to change its name, pay reparations to any victims and oust some top leaders, including Zacharias family members.

Zacharias, a widely popular author and speaker, died of cancer in May at age 74. One measure of his stature in Christian circles: Vice President Mike Pence spoke at his memorial service, lauding him as a great evangelist "armed with intellect, girded with truth and love."

Zacharias founded his international ministry, known as RZIM, in 1984, with a mission to engage in "Christian apologetics" — defending Christianity with powerful intellectual arguments. Based in suburban Atlanta, RZIM has operations in about 20 countries and a roster of scores of traveling speakers.

In recent months, the organization has been plunged into crisis, precipitated by a Sept. 29 article in the evangelical publication Christianity Today asserting that over a period of about five years, Zacharias sexually harassed three women who worked as massage therapists at two day spas he co-owned in an Atlanta suburb.

RZIM's leadership initially challenged the claims, asserting that the allegations "do not in any way comport with the man we knew for decades — we believe them to be false."

However, RZIM hired an Atlanta law firm, Miller & Martin, in October to conduct an independent investigation.

Completion of the report, and its promised public release, is still weeks away. But on Dec. 22 the law firm

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 83 of 87

submitted a dramatic "interim update" to RZIM's executive committee, which made it public the next day.

The law firm summarized its investigation, which included dozens of interviews, as well as review of documents and electronic data. In the process, the firm said, "We have found significant, credible evidence that Mr. Zacharias engaged in sexual misconduct over the course of many years."

"Some of that misconduct is consistent with and corroborative of that which is reported in the news recently, and some of the conduct we have uncovered is more serious," it added. "Our investigation is ongoing, and we continue to pursue leads."

In disclosing the interim findings, the RZIM executive committee members described themselves as heartbroken and expressed remorse on behalf of those victimized by Zacharias.

The disclosures already have had tangible impact. Several radio outlets, including Moody Radio — one of the largest Christian networks in the U.S. — have dropped RZIM programs. Some booksellers have pulled Zacharias' books from their offerings. In Britain, a network of student-led mission teams operating on university campuses has asked RZIM-affiliated speakers to withdraw from upcoming events.

There has been heavy pressure on RZIM from its British affiliate, the Zacharias Trust. In a letter to its staff on Dec. 23, the trust's board members said they were urging the U.S. leadership to issue a "profound apology" to any victims and commit to "reform radically the governance, leadership and accountability of the RZIM organization."

RZIM spokesperson Ruth Malhotra told The Associated Press that the organization's senior leaders, including CEO Sarah Davis — who is Zacharias' eldest daughter — and President Michael Ramsden, were declining to grant interviews until after the law firm's investigation concludes.

Davis, in an email obtained by the AP, wrote to RZIM staff on Dec. 23 acknowledging that the developments were likely to have caused "grief, confusion, disillusionment and anger" and asking that they refrain from speaking to the media while the investigation is underway.

However, several employees have made clear in social media posts and in letters that have been shared publicly that they are dismayed with the leadership's handling of the scandal. They say the leaders have discussed the option of "rebranding," which would likely entail a change of the organization's name, but the employees are pressing for additional steps, including reparations and a leadership overhaul.

Among them is Carson Weitnauer, a specialist in online outreach for RZIM's Zacharias Institute. Writing on his blog, he said his faith in the organization's leadership has been shattered.

"The realization that Ravi Zacharias was not the greatest apologist of his generation — but rather one of its greatest frauds — has felt like a catastrophic betrayal," Weitnauer wrote. "I have felt a sickening combination of revulsion and grief."

RZIM staff members "have been badly misled by our secretive board and senior leaders," he continued. "RZIM must change its name, remove Ravi's material, repent for its many failures, and provide a restorative response to the harm that Ravi's victims experienced."

In a follow-up post, Weitnauer asked if the board would resign "to acknowledge their failure to provide accountability to Ravi Zacharias for more than a decade."

Also going public with criticism was Max Baker-Hytch, a philosophy instructor at the University of Oxford who has worked for several years with RZIM's Oxford Center for Christian Apologetics in Britain.

In a pair of letters to RZIM board members, which he later shared with the AP, Baker-Hytch faulted the board for lack of transparency and urged it to release internal governance information, such as the names and salaries of senior officials. Such information about nonprofits is normally accessible to the public via IRS Form 990s, but RZIM has not disclosed a Form 990 since 2015; Malhotra said it became exempt from filing after asking the IRS to reclassify it as "an association of churches."

"The board's continued secrecy, not only to the employees they oversee, but also to the public who rightly want full accountability, has irreparably damaged the board's credibility," Baker-Hytch wrote Dec. 20. "The only way I can see the public credibility of this organisation being restored is for there to be a brand-new Global Board of Directors and Global CEO, none of whom are Zacharias family members, and to file Form 990s ... for the years they haven't been filed."

RZIM's Form 990 for 2015 reported that nearly all its revenue came from contributions and grants, which

totalled \$24.6 million. Zacharias' wife, Margaret, is listed as vice chairman of ministry; their eldest daughter, Sarah Davis, as executive director; and their younger daughter, Naomi Zacharias, as vice president for a grant-making division called Wellspring International.

Zacharias had been entangled in some previous controversies over how he had publicly described his academic credentials and over his claim, later challenged in legal proceedings, that he was the target of an extortion scheme related to sexting and sexually explicit photos.

Weitnauer and Baker-Hytch said the RZIM board was too credulous in accepting Zacharias' version of the sexting case and too dismissive of claims by the woman he accused, Lori Anne Thompson. She contends that Zacharias groomed her to participate in secretive communications that eventually included sending nude photos of herself.

Zacharias dropped his extortion lawsuit in November 2017, and the parties eventually reached a private settlement.

In a statement posted online on Dec. 23, Thompson and her husband thanked RZIM employees who questioned the organization's handling of the case.

"We were targeted, groomed, exploited, malevolently litigated against, falsely accused as elaborate extortionists," the statement said. "Apologies should be as far reaching as the damage."

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through The Conversation U.S. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

## Hope fades in Norway landslide that left 7 dead; 3 missing

By JAN M. OLSEN Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Norwegian officials insisted Monday that there was "still hope" of finding survivors in air pockets five days after a landslide killed at least seven people as it carried away homes in a village north of the capital. Three people are still missing.

Police spokesman Roger Pettersen said search efforts in the landslide-hit village of Ask, 25 kilometers (16 miles) northeast of Oslo, are still considered "a rescue operation." But only bodies have been found in the past few days.

The region's below-freezing temperatures are "working against us, but we have been very clear in our advice to the (rescuers) that as long as there are cavities where the missing may have stayed, it is possible to survive," said Dr. Halvard Stave, who is taking part in the rescue operation.

Temperatures in Ask were minus 8 degrees Celsius (17.6 degrees Fahrenheit) on Monday.

"I would still describe the situation as very unreal," said Anders Oestensen, the mayor of Gjerdrum municipality, where Ask is located.

Authorities said one victim was found Friday, three more on Saturday and three others Sunday. Ten people have been injured, one of them seriously.

Search teams patrolled with dogs as helicopters and drones with heat-detecting cameras flew over the ravaged hillside in Ask, a village of 5,000 that was hit by the worst landslide in modern Norwegian history. At least 1,000 people were evacuated.

The landslide early Wednesday cut across a road through Ask, leaving a deep, crater-like ravine. Some buildings are now hanging on the edge of the ravine, which grew to be 700 meters (2,300 feet) long and 300 meters (1,000 feet) wide. At least nine buildings with over 30 apartments were destroyed.

"This is completely terrible," King Harald V said after the Norwegian royals visited the landslide site on Sunday.

The limited number of daylight hours in Norway at this time of year and fears of further erosion have hampered rescue operations. The ground is fragile at the site and unable to hold the weight of heavy rescue equipment.

The exact cause of the accident is not yet known but the area is known for having a lot of quick clay, a material that can change from solid to liquid form. Experts said the quick clay, combined with excessive

precipitation and damp winter weather, may have contributed to the landslide.

In 2005, Norwegian authorities warned people not to construct residential buildings in the area, saying it was "a high risk zone" for landslides, but houses were eventually built there later in the decade.

Norway's biggest landslide was in 1893 in Verdalen, north of Trondheim in mid-Norway and killed 116 people, the VG newspaper reported. It was reportedly up to 40 times bigger than the one in Ask where somewhere between 1.4 million and 2 million cubic meters of land tumbled down.

## Trump's loyal fans pose challenges for Republicans, Biden

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Their candidate may have lost the election, but President Donald Trump's supporters have no intention of fading away. After spending weeks amplifying Trump's unfounded claims that the November election was rigged against him, many of his loyal fans are eagerly awaiting his next ventures, including a potential presidential run in 2024.

In the meantime, they present a daunting challenge for President-elect Joe Biden: how to govern a bitterly divided nation that now includes many who not only disagree with his policies, but view him as an illegitimate president who won only because of mass election fraud, which did not actually happen.

"The effort by the Trump forces to delegitimize Biden has poisoned our political bloodstream so badly that it could take years to recover," said David Gergen, who served as an adviser to Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton.

Trump will leave the White House on Jan. 20 with an iron grip on a Republican Party that has been transformed on his watch. Once known for its country club elites and embrace of military intervention and free trade, the GOP under Trump has become a populist party with an "America first" foreign policy that has alienated allies and fomented distrust in both international and domestic government institutions.

"I think the Republican Party today is the party of President Trump, and so his positions are the positions of the Republican voters," Sen. Mitt Romney, the 2012 Republican presidential nominee, recently told SiriusXM. The Utah senator said he believes Trump's "enormous influence" with the party is likely to wane to a certain degree as new faces step forward.

But among "those that are circling the 2024 race, beyond President Trump, it seems that many of them are headed in the same, more populist-oriented direction," he said.

In any case, Trump has no intention of ceding the spotlight as he openly flirts with running again in four years.

Trump will "loom very large over the Republican Party," predicted Alyssa Farah, until recently White House communications director. Don't expect Trump and Trumpism to "go off into the sunset," Farah says.

"He's got the most energetic base in modern political history," she said. "What the party is going to face is the reality that the president, even though it looks like he didn't win, got more votes than a Romney, than a McCain, than any Republican candidate in history. And we can't discount the voices of those 70 million Americans."

Exactly what Trump's post-White House future will look like is a work in progress.

He is expected to decamp to Florida with a small coterie of aides, where he will likely continue to use his Twitter bullhorn to reward allies and lash out at those who cross him as he mulls his next venture. That has put many of those eyeing taking on his mantle to run in 2024 in an awkward position.

"Look, he's the leader of this movement. No matter what happens in 2020, 2024 is there for his taking," White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said in a recent appearance on Fox News Channel. "His base is strong, they're not going away."

That also poses a conundrum for Biden, who will take an oath to lead a nation that appears more bitterly divided than at any time in modern history. Those divisions have only been exacerbated by Trump's campaign to cast doubt on the integrity of the election and overturn the will of the American people.

As a result, just 60% of Americans, including just 23% of Republicans, believe Biden's victory was legitimate, according to a recent Quinnipiac University poll.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 86 of 87

Trump has repeatedly blamed his defeat on widespread voter fraud, despite the consensus of nonpartisan election officials that there wasn't any. Of the dozens of lawsuits the president and his allies have filed challenging election results, nearly all have been dismissed or dropped.

Gergen said the future of Trump's base will likely depend on a number of factors, including how the media cover him post-presidency and whether he becomes embroiled in legal troubles. He predicted Trump's actions will make it far harder for Biden to govern.

"It's going to be harder for a lot of Republicans to come to the negotiating table," Gergen said. He added that Trump's backers were likely to "keep a lot of pressure on mainstream Republicans not to break too often."

Charlie Sykes, a conservative talk radio host-turned-Trump critic who bemoaned Trump's efforts to delegitimize Biden's election, sees the potential for long-term damage to trust in fundamental Democratic institutions.

"Trumpism is going to be a major force because he's both a cause and symptom of our division," Sykes said. "And he leaves behind him a legacy of real distrust, real divisions, Americans really not trusting one another, not trusting institutions."

Biden is well aware of the difficult road ahead in uniting a divided nation. But his aides have expressed confidence, pointing to positive signs like General Motors' recent decision to switch sides in its legal fight against California's right to set its own clean-air standards. And they voice hope that Biden may be able to appeal to some of Trump's working-class voters with priorities like bolstering American manufacturing and ensuring critical supplies are made in the U.S.

"We are realistic that there will always be folks who refuse to support the president-elect's agenda that more than 81 million Americans voted for. But that's not everyone," said Biden transition spokesman TJ Ducklo. "We believe there are a lot of Americans who voted for Donald Trump who just want their elected officials to deliver meaningful help during this once-in-a-generation crisis."

That will depend on people like Marthamae Kottschade, a self-described "Trumper" and member of "Trump's Front Row Joes," who traveled the county attending the president's campaign rallies.

Kottschade, who lives in Rochester, Minnesota, said she still has her Washington, D.C., hotel room booked for Inauguration Day and expects to see Trump sworn in again as president, even though Trump has no realistic path to overturn Biden's victory.

She said if Biden does end up in the White House, a lot of Trump supporters are ready to get more involved in politics at the local level before moving on to the next election.

"I know it's a movement. We firmly believe that as Trumpians," she said. "A year from now we may have Joe Biden as our president. ... We will have to accept it. This was the hand we were dealt with. And move on from there."

Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 5, the fifth day of 2021. There are 360 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 5, 1925, Democrat Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming took office as America's first female governor, succeeding her late husband, William, following a special election.

On this date:

In 1589, Catherine de Medici (MEHD'-uh-chee) of France died at age 69.

In 1781, a British naval expedition led by Benedict Arnold burned Richmond, Virginia.

In 1896, an Austrian newspaper, Wiener Presse, reported the discovery by German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen (RENT'-gun) of a type of radiation that came to be known as X-rays.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, Jan. 05, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 185 ~ 87 of 87**

In 1914, auto industrialist Henry Ford announced he was going to pay workers \$5 for an 8-hour day, as opposed to \$2.34 for a 9-hour day. (Employees still worked six days a week; the 5-day work week was instituted in 1926.)

In 1943, educator and scientist George Washington Carver, who was born into slavery, died in Tuskegee, Alabama, at about age 80.

In 1949, in his State of the Union address, President Harry S. Truman labeled his administration the Fair Deal.

In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed assistance to countries to help them resist Communist aggression in what became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon announced that he had ordered development of the space shuttle.

In 1975, "The Wiz," a musical version of L. Frank Baum's "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" featuring an all-Black cast, opened on Broadway.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan announced he was nominating Elizabeth Dole to succeed Drew Lewis as secretary of transportation; Dole became the first woman to head a Cabinet department in Reagan's administration, and the first to head the DOT.

In 1998, Sonny Bono, the 1960s pop star-turned-politician, was killed when he struck a tree while skiing at the Heavenly Ski Resort on the Nevada-California state line; he was 62.

In 2004, foreigners arriving at U.S. airports were photographed and had their fingerprints scanned in the start of a government effort to keep terrorists out of the country.

Ten years ago: John Boehner was elected speaker as Republicans regained control of the House of Representatives on the first day of the new Congress. White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs announced he was stepping down. Roberto Alomar and Bert Blyleven were elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Five years ago: With tears streaking his cheeks, President Barack Obama launched a final-year push to tighten sales of firearms in the U.S., using his presidential powers in the absence of tougher gun restrictions that Congress refused to pass, coming out with plans for expanded background checks and other modest measures. French composer and conductor Pierre Boulez, 90, died in Baden-Baden, Germany.

One year ago: President Donald Trump reiterated his view that cultural sites in Iran could be targeted if Iran were to retaliate for the drone strike that killed Iran's top general; there were concerns even within his administration that doing so could constitute a war crime under international law. Amid heightened tensions over the killing of an Iranian general, Iran said it would no longer abide by the limits contained in the 2015 nuclear deal. The World War I tale "1917" captured the Golden Globe for best dramatic film, while "Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood" won for best comedy or musical; in television categories, real-life stories captured top honors, including Olivia Colman's portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II and Michelle Williams' performance as Broadway star Gwen Verdon.

Today's Birthdays: Former Vice President Walter F. Mondale is 93. Actor Robert Duvall is 90. Juan Carlos, former King of Spain, is 83. Singer-musician Athol Guy (The Seekers) is 81. Former talk show host Charlie Rose is 79. Actor-director Diane Keaton is 75. Actor Ted Lange (Ianj) is 73. Rhythm-and-blues musician George "Funky" Brown (Kool and the Gang) is 72. Rock musician Chris Stein (Blondie) is 71. Former CIA Director George Tenet is 68. Actor Pamela Sue Martin is 68. Actor Clancy Brown is 62. Singer Iris Dement is 60. Actor Suzy Amis is 59. Actor Ricky Paull Goldin is 56. Actor Vinnie Jones is 56. Rock musician Kate Schellenbach (Luscious Jackson) is 55. Actor Joe Flanigan is 54. Talk show host/dancer-choreographer Carrie Ann Inaba is 53. Rock musician Troy Van Leeuwen (Queens of the Stone Age) is 53. Actor Heather Paige Kent is 52. Rock singer Marilyn Manson is 52. Actor Shea Whigham is 52. Actor Derek Cecil is 48. Actor-comedian Jessica Chaffin is 47. Actor Bradley Cooper is 46. Actor January Jones is 43. Actor Brooklyn Sudano is 40. Actor Franz Drameh is 28.